KOINONIA

THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY GRADUATE FORUM

ANNUAL FORUM 2005

OPEN SUBMISSION

BOOK REVIEWS

VOLUME XVII
2005

ISSN 1047-1057

KOINONIA is published annually by Ph.D. students under the auspices of Princeton Theological Seminary. It offers a space for multidisciplinary, multicultural, and multireligious conversation about issues related to religion and theology. Carried by over 100 institutional libraries, *KOINONIA* is indexed in *Religion Index One: Periodicals*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 820 Church St., Suite 300, Evanston, Il 60201. Book reviews are indexed in *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*. These indexes are part of ATLA Religion Database, available on CD-ROM from ATLA and also online via Dialog Information Services.

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Editorial

Freeze/Meltdown in Palestine and Greenland, and American Congregational Power

SANDRA COSTEN KUNZ

Mujahed Salameh, head of the Palestinian Petroleum Agency, said today that he expects all the gasoline and cooking gas in Palestine to run out within a few hours. Interviewed by Reuters news agency, he predicted, "There will be economic catastrophe . . . . Many factories, bakeries and transport will stop working."[1]

This current fuel crisis is one of the effects of the foreign aid freeze by the US and the European Union initiated when Hamas won 76 seats in the 132-member Palestinian Parliament. Another effect has been medical cutbacks. Dr. Juma As-Saqqa of Shifa Hospital in Gaza City reported that four dialysis patients have died this month since the hospital was forced to reduce dialysis treatments from three to two times per week.[2]

Life appears to have gotten worse in Palestine during the months since the papers published in this issue were delivered at our annual forum, which focused on secular and religious nationalisms among Palestinian Christians. One poignant aspect of planning this forum was that we found no Palestinian Christian doctoral student who could join us as a respondent, even though 60% of Palestinian Christians live in the diaspora. I was told that this was due to the constant disruption of Palestinian life, including academic work. I found this particularly disturbing given the 2003 death of Palestinian Christian scholar Edward Said, who for decades

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1 BBC News, "Palestinian Fuel Crisis Looming," accessed May 10, 2006, available from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4758471.stm.

2 BBC News, "Cuts Squeeze Lifeline to Gaza's Sick," accessed May 10, 2006, available from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4756303.stm

raised a prophetically incisive yet often irenic voice for justice, reconciliation, and the difficult intellectual work of examining—and changing—the way we view and treat the cultural other.

This editorial is being written against the backdrop not only of the increasing breakdown of the infrastructure of Palestine, but of recent geological reports about the breakdown of the ecological infrastructure of our entire planet. As reported in the February 26, 2006 issue of *Time,* Michael Oppenheimer, professor of geosciences and international affairs at Princeton University, sees the earth as rapidly approaching several ecological "tipping points." These are situations "where relatively small changes in temperature can suddenly cause disproportionately large effects."[3] Even scientists like Oppenheimer, who have been sounding warnings about global warming for years, have been caught off guard by the unexpected rate of glacial meltdown in Greenland and related changes in ocean currents. Carbon emissions from petroleum and coal may trigger not only hotter climates in some parts of the world, but also colder climates in northern latitudes warmed by the Gulf Stream. It appears to me that these reports may be precipitating a tipping point in terms of US public and (I pray) political response to global environmental degradation. Even President Bush is now referring to the "American addiction" to petroleum. He is not, however, publicly connecting the dots between the way this "addiction" is fueling the global environmental crisis and the Palestinian fuel and medical crisis – not to mention various crises in Iraq, Iran, and other global hot spots sitting on oil reserves.

Our forum this year was built around a paper entitled "Palestinian Christians and Nationalism(s): Religious and Secular," written by **Robert O. Smith**, Lutheran Chaplain at University of Chicago and a doctoral student in the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies at Baylor University. US Christians often assume, he recounts, that Palestinian Christians, because of their minority status within Palestine, are marginalized and unable to participate in either political or cultural discourse. Through focusing on the various missions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), his paper highlights Pal-

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3 Michael D. Lemonick, "Has the Meltdown Begun," *Time* Feb. 26, 2006, accessed online at http://www.time.com/time/archive/preview/0,10987,1161231,00.html March 14, 2006.

estinian Christian contributions to Palestinian national culture. Following Palestinian liberation theologian Naim Stifin Ateek, he frames these contributions in terms of a Palestinian contextual theology of *martyria*, that is, witness.

Smith insists that, in contrast to the visions for the land derived from "the religious nationalisms of Jewish and Islamist extremists who wield considerable popular authority within Israeli politics and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT)," most Palestinian Christians have consistently advocated for "the development of a Palestinian state in which diversity—especially religious diversity—is valued and cultivated rather than merely managed or tolerated" (2). This Palestinian Christian nationalist vision of welcomed diversity has largely been ignored not only by extremist Israeli and Palestinian nationalists fighting for state preference for Jews or Muslims, but by "western Christians who dismiss their 'eastern' perspectives (and those of most other Arab Christians who live in the Middle East) while giving massive financial and ideological support to expansionist Israeli policies" (2).

While acknowledging Jewish and Islamic identification of Christianity with colonialism, Smith points out the ancient origins of some Palestinian churches, and that those which do have modern Euro-American missionary roots have undergone a process of Arabization in culture and leadership. Quoting Edward Said and Mitri Raheb, pastor of the ELCJHL church in Bethlehem, Smith argues that Christian and Muslim Palestinians share Arabic language, culture, and history and usually coexist in a "symbiotic," not an antagonistic, relationship. He notes the importance of ELCJHL schools in educating both Christian and Muslim intellectuals and in the development of a pan-Arabic rather than an Islamic-based nationalism. The "demographic hemorrhage" of Palestinian Christians to Europe and North and South America in response to Israeli "politicide" has, Smith warns, made it easier for the territorial Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be cast primarily in terms of religion, or a "clash of civilizations."

Given the broad importance of this year's topic, the editorial board invited a large panel reflecting both religious and disciplinary diversity. Our first respondent, **Michelle Cohen**, cultural anthropology doctoral student at University of North Carolina, explores what it means to be a

"nation" without a particular "state." She notes that most "tradition, rather than being immemorial, is a product of particular intersections of power and desire that can be quite recent" (37). Her reading of Smith's paper thus prompts her to ask:

- How is it that Palestinian Christians have come to be largely invisible in the West in discussions about the Palestinians and their struggles (33)?
- What are the losses, accommodations, and amnesias that must take place in order for Palestinian Christians to claim a "symbiotic" relationship with Palestinian Muslims (36)?

Cohen agrees with Smith that "Perhaps the minority presence that Palestinian Christians have in Palestine and the Arab world is, instead of a limitation, an asset: a door is opened that perhaps would have remained shut or unseen" (38).

The response of **Khurram Hussain**, doctoral student in Religious Studies at Yale, does not share Smith's optimism for secular nationalism as an alternative. He asks, "Does secularism of the western, liberal kind truly provide adequate safeguards against the totalizing and normalizing projects of nation-states? As has been apparent to me as a Muslim living in the US, even ostensibly advanced secular nation-states are not immune to jingoism and state-sanctioned bigotry" (43). He argues that the Palestinian Christian community has been ignored because it cannot be properly "narrativized" in either the "quasi-religious nationalisms now prevalent in the Holy Lands, or in the common sense Western discourse on Muslim backwardness and barbarity that sustains the unflinching support of Americans" (42-3). He concludes by raising, not as an opinion but as a point for discussion, the question of whether the Palestinian Christian response to their increasingly nationalized context could be well-served by following the traditional Parsi paradigm of shunning politics and serving instead as "sugar" invisibly sweetening the culture through social work, charity and art.

Irfan Khawaja, Ph.D. candidate in philosophy at Notre Dame, strongly advocates secular nationalism. He contends, quoting Alisdair MacIntyre, that "It is in key part in the lives of families, parishes, schools, clinics, workplaces, and local neighborhood communities that any particular

conception of the good achieves recognizable form" (46-7). He agrees that ELCJHL efforts of this sort are achieving good in a difficult context. But he questions whether a Christian theology of *martyria*, or any theology, has anything to do with the good such efforts accomplish. He explains:

> As a secular ethicist, my guess is that there is some entirely secular feature of Palestinian Christian churches (or more specifically the ELCJHL) that inculcates the moral virtues, discipline and solidarity required for the pursuit of common goods (48). Clearly, organizations like the PLO, Hamas and Hezbullah lack what organizations like the ELCJHL evidently have: a workable conception of the common good, and the moral resources to strive for it in a dignified way (49).

In answer to the important question of why the ELCJHL's moral resources have been more productive than those of other Palestinian organizations, Khawaja proposes that, "The answer, I think, lies in the difference between conceptions of political life based essentially on reason and individual rights, and those based on force" (49).

Callie Plunket-Brewton, Princeton Seminary doctoral student in Old Testament, refers to Palestinian theologian Ateek's observation that Palestinian Christians find the conquest narratives in the Pentateuch agonizing because "If the Jews are the chosen people of God, then the Palestinians must be the Canaanites, and, any action may be taken against them" (51). Plunket-Brewton observes that Israeli historian Benny Morris does indeed defend ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians as a wartime action. Although she admits that in the Pentateuch God does promise to cleanse the land, she adds that in the book of Judges "God declares that the inhabitants of the land will now remain there, alongside the Israelites," and that "the people of Israel are no longer given the promise of an empty land, a clean slate on which they can build their holy society" (52). Plunket-Brewton sees two themes running through the entire Old Testament which should be considered:

1) the land belongs to God and not to human beings,
2) God's dwelling with Israel in the land is declared by God to depend upon their just treatment of the most vulnerable: orphans, widows, and aliens.

Religion and Society doctoral student **Lawrence M. Stratton,** also at Princeton Seminary, contrasts two Christian responses to the current situ-

situation in Israel and Palestine. First, he commends the *leavening* influence of ELCJHL facilitation of interfaith Christian, Jewish, Muslim trialogue and other ministries aimed at peace education. He then traces and critiques the *inflammatory* influence of Christian Zionism, an uncritical support of Israeli expansionism based upon a theological dispensationalism in which "the Palestinians are reduced to mere pawns in the apocalyptic drama."[4] Contending that "dispensationalist interpretations of various biblical passages are driving aspects of American Middle East policy" (60), he notes that, like other extremist Zionist positions, Christian Zionism labels criticism of Israel's current behavior toward Palestinians as anti-Semitism. Stratton commends the 2004 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) for its "selective disinvestment from corporations operating in Israel" and for its theological critique of Christian Zionism.

Elliot Ratzman, a doctoral student in Princeton University's Religion Department, addresses nondispensationalist Christian theological approaches to the "slow-motion ethnic cleansing of Palestinians" (66). He critiques Palestinian Ateek's "slap-dash hermeneutic that depends on questioning the authenticity of [biblical] passages describing Israelite violence" (68). Noting that he is "holding out for a just Zionism and a socialist Israel" (75), he argues that Christian theology "can't do justice to the Jewish religion—especially Rabbinic Judaism—and *not* acknowledge the deep connection between Jews and the Holy Land" (68). Christians writers Ateek, Rosemary Radford Reuther, and non-violent activist Mubarak Awad "affirm the national rights of Palestinians while denying many if not all of the national claims of Jews. Jews, we are told, are members of a religion, not a nation." (68) Noting Stanley Hauerwas' critique of nationalistic "Constantinian Christianity," Ratzman suggests that when faced with non-state actors aspiring to become state actors, Christians would do well "to separate the authentic claims of justice from the tribalist claims of power, nationalist mythology, and ethnic chauvinism" (72). He recommends that Christians support the Mennonite-founded Christian peacemaker teams, and other groups like Rabbis for Human Rights and "the role they are ask-

4 Stratton is quoting John T. Pawlikowski. "Ethical Issues in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" in Rosemary Radford Ruether and Marc H., eds. *Beyond Occupation: American Jewish, Christian, and Palestinian Voice for Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), 160.

ing you to play in resolving the conflict . . . After all, theology and theory are by no means adequate substitutes for smart organizing and engaged activism. . . (72). Just knowing about a conflict, and there is a lot to know, too much to know, never accomplishes anything without organizing" (74).

In addition to our evening forum and breakfast, this year *Koinonia* sponsored a lunchtime powerpoint presentation by Smith with photos of Palestinian Christian churches, leaders, and neighborhoods. Our hope was to encourage discussion among forum participants and aspiring pastors and other Christian educators leading to "smart organizing" in congregations. Our forum made it clear that Palestinian Christian congregations, some of which trace their lineage back to the first-century, seem to have a providential role to play in any peace that is to come in this land. Our forum made it clear as well that American Christians, even if we look only at our power to vote, have a heavy investment in the continuing chaos or potential peace there. I'm also convinced that American congregations, if we draw upon the resources for discernment given us by God's Spirit, may go beyond simply voting to becoming the locus for imagining new creative possibilities for peace-building. Perhaps if we listen to the voices of the ancient churches (especially those with roots in the Middle East) and the voices of younger churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, we somewhat "middle-aged" American churches can find new perspectives and paths of "engaged activism" in response to this agonizing situation. The diaspora of Christians from many nations to the US at this point could make this possible, if we make the effort to listen to them.[5]

In addition to our forum articles, this issue includes Princeton Seminary theology doctoral student John Drury's article which examines Hans Urs von Balthasar's reflections on Christ's descent into hell in light of his controversial views on the hope that all will be saved. Drury argues that this hope of Balthasar's is grounded in part in Christ's descent, and that these two aspects of his work are connected by the substitutionary character of Christ's experience of hell.

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5 See Andrew F. Walls, "The Ephesian Moment: At a Crossroads in Christian History," in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 81.

In light of Jesus' sufferings connected with the world's salvation, and in light of the conflicts in Israel-Palestine and other hot spots connected with the scramble for oil, and in light of our destruction of God's creation connected with carbon emissions, perhaps it is time for American Christians to seriously consider a long-term fast from our current level of petroleum consumption. Members of Christian congregations have immense potential power to support each other in doing this. May all of us in the US who proclaim Christ's reign pray and work for the peace of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and the homes of all our fellow-creatures on this beautiful planet God created for our mutual delight.

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Palestinian Christians and Nationalism(s): Religious and Secular

ROBERT O. SMITH

"So, how long has your family been Christian? When did your ancestors first hear about the gospel? Who brought them the message of salvation?"

Invariably, I am asked by American and European visitors about my Christian origins. People are curious about me in particular and about Palestinian Christians in general.

"It was likely prior to Christianity entering the Americas," I often answer. "Actually, they were Christian long before your own European ancestors first heard the gospel."

Munib Younan, *Witnessing for Peace*

Palestinian nationalism is intimately linked to Jewish nationalism.[1] Zionism has been highly successful at directing western political powers toward the establishment and maintenance of the state of Israel. Yet the nationalism yearned for by Palestinians—the descendants of persons living in the land prior to organized Jewish immigration—has garnered little international support. Support even from Arab states has been tentative. The goal envisioned by the United Nations partition plan of 1947 (A/RES/181) has not yet come to fruition: a secure and independent state of Palestine existing beside the state of Israel has not yet been established. Palestinian Christians, a population relatively unknown to their North American core-

1 The author notes with gratitude the assistance and helpful suggestions of Santiago Slabodsky, Charles McDaniel, Marc Ellis, and Michele Bennett in developing this paper with this perspective.

ligionists, have long been involved in the related goals of forging Palestinian national identity and realizing Palestinian nationalist aspirations for a stable, secure, fiscally viable and independent state.

Western Christians are not well-acquainted with Palestinian Christians. This ignorance often leads to the assumption that Christians are a marginalized minority within Palestine unable to participate in either political or cultural discourse. This is not the case. In fact, though they are a denominationally and sometimes politically diverse lot, Palestinian Christians have long made seminal contributions to the development of Palestinian identity and nationalism, elements understood to be constitutive of Palestinian hope.

One constant theme of Palestinian Christian concern is the development of a Palestinian state in which diversity—especially religious diversity—is valued and cultivated rather than merely managed or tolerated. This vision, concomitant with other constructive goals, has been crushed between two powers that have little regard for its continued existence. On one side they are confronted by the religious nationalisms of Jewish and Islamist extremists who wield considerable popular authority within Israeli politics and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), while on the other they encounter western Christians who dismiss their 'eastern' perspectives (and those of most Arab Christians who live in the Middle East) while giving massive financial and ideological support to expansionist Israeli policies.[2] What is the Palestinian Christian community doing in this unenviable situation?

THE PALESTINIAN LUTHERAN COMMUNITY

This essay will focus on a small but highly influential community within the Palestinian Christian family, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).[3] Though a Protestant denomination among

2 This indifference to Palestinian concerns is by no means limited to American Christians. See Paul Charles Merkley, *Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

3 The ELCJHL has undergone many name changes. When it was first recognized in 1959 by Jordan's King Hussein, all of the denomination's six congregations were in Jordanian territory. Thus, until recently, its official name was Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan (ELCJ). With the 1967 war and Israel's subsequent occupation of the West Bank, five of those congregations found themselves in what the UN then recognized as Occupied Palestinian

so many Catholic and Orthodox patriarchates, the ELCJHL has developed a voice that faithfully articulates Palestinian Christian concerns. Through regional and local involvement in the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), partnerships with the Lutheran World Federation, participation in interfaith dialogue with both Muslims and Israeli Jews, and the nurturing of strong ties with Lutherans and other Christians in Europe and North America, the ELCJHL has emerged as a formidable voice pleading for a renewal of Christian witness within and toward Israel/Palestine and crying out for a just peace enjoyed by all its inhabitants.

> With a membership of roughly 2400, the ELCJHL has five congregations in the occupied West Bank and one congregation in Amman, Jordan. The ELCJHL traces its beginnings to 1841 and the establishment of "an Anglo-Prussian joint bishopric ... founded in Jerusalem with the intention of alternating bishops between the Anglicans and Lutherans." Before dissipating in 1886, the partnership produced several schools, an orphanage and a hospital.[4] The process of indigenizing the Palestinian Lutheran church began with the first Arab congregation, established in 1929, and culminated with the consecration of the first Palestinian bishop, the Rt. Rev. Daoud Haddad, in 1979. (Bailey and Bailey 2003, 106–7)

The ELCJHL is presently led by Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan and headquartered in Redeemer Lutheran Church located in the Old City of East Jerusalem, nearly adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In addition to congregational activities, the denomination's principal ministries revolve around educational and cultural institutions that strive to serve all Palestinians: "Five schools and two boarding homes have an enrollment of more than three thousand pupils, nearly half of whom are Muslim." Under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, the ELCJHL has developed "the Dar al-Kalima (House of the Word) Academy for interreligious and intercultural studies ... and the International Center of Bethlehem, including a media center"

Territory, thus necessitating an informal reconfiguration of the denomination's name. Until early 2005, ELCJ was configured to indicate the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem (serving in Palestine, Jordan and Israel).

4 This hospital was the forerunner to Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives in what is now East Jerusalem. Operated by the Lutheran World Federation, the hospital has in recent years been embroiled in an employee payroll tax controversy with the state of Israel that threatens to significantly reduce health care to Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem.

(Bailey and Bailey 2003, 107). The ELCJHL benefits from institutional relationships with Lutheran bodies in northern Europe, including those in Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway. The Redeemer church building is still officially owned by the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church in Germany.[5] These efforts, directly supported by western Lutheran partners, help foster an independent sense of Palestinian cultural and political expression, necessary components for resisting the material and psychic strictures of military occupation.

CHRISTIANS IN THE PALESTINIAN CONTEXT

In 2003, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimated that the number of Palestinians worldwide was 9.6 million. Of this figure, 3.7 million live in the OPT, 1.1 million in the state of Israel and 4.8 million in the diaspora. The diaspora includes Palestinians living in nearby states (chiefly Jordan and Lebanon) and those who have emigrated, mostly to Europe and North America. Totaling about 400,000, Palestinian Christians make up roughly 4.1% of the worldwide Palestinian population.[6] Their geographic distribution closely follows important locations in Christian history: "About 30,000 live in and around Bethlehem, the city of the Incarnation; about 20,000 live in and around Jerusalem, the city of the cross and Resurrection; and approximately 100,000 Christian Palestinians live in and around Nazareth, the city of the Annunciation" (Raheb 1995, 4). Additionally, "At least 250,000 Palestinian Christians live in the diaspora, more than 60 percent of all Palestinian Christians worldwide" (Bailey and Bailey 2003, 156).

These Christians, whether in the diaspora or still in the land, are proud of their homeland and its importance for worldwide Christianity. As Raheb has written of his community's demographics in Israel/Palestine, "The Christian Palestinians of today are nothing else than the Christian remnant that has remained steadfast despite all the persecutions in Palestine. These Christians live where the most important events of revelation took

5 The ELCJHL's close ties with European Christians reinforce its commitment to avoiding the antisemitic rhetoric employed by some who criticize Israeli policy and ideology.

6 Exact membership figures are impossible to find, but rough estimates (gathered from Bailey and Bailey) suggest these totals for Christian groups in the Holy Land (see appendix 1).

place" (1995, 4). Nevertheless, the Christians of Palestine are in danger of dwindling to insignificant levels, a matter of great significance for many Christians around the world.

Throughout the Middle East, Christian communities have experienced what has been called a "demographic hemorrhage." While the birth rate among Christian families is lower than that of Muslims, the primary reason for the low population growth is emigration. This trend is nowhere more pronounced than in the Christian communities of Israel/Palestine. In the early 1900s, Christians were estimated to be about 20 percent of the Holy Land population; a census during the British Mandate (between the two world wars) calculated their proportion at 13%. In 2005 they number only about 1.6%. Given this declining population, "even modest emigration can result in a serious loss in percentages." Those who emigrate are generally from the middle classes, leaving in search of educational and economic opportunities. It has therefore been observed that, ironically, "the historical Christian commitment to quality education therefore actually encourages emigration" (Bailey and Bailey 2003, 44).

Contemporary Palestinian Christian emigration is linked directly to processes culminating in the founding of the state of Israel.[7] With Israel's declaration of independence in 1948 and the ensuing Arab war, an estimated 700,000 to 800,000 Palestinians—Christians *and* Muslims—were driven from their homes and possessions to refugee status. Most relocated to the West Bank, across the Jordan River, or north into Lebanon. Among these refugees were an estimated 50,000 Christians. In 1948, Christians comprised "50 percent of Jerusalem's residents; today, they are not more than 10 percent and a significant number of these are expatriates" (Jarjour 2003, 14). Historically, therefore, Palestinian Christians are inextricably bound to the circumstances of all Palestinians. The tenuous and contingent nature of contemporary Palestinian statelessness is of more immediate concern. The threat to Palestinians inherent to their unstable political situation was recently highlighted in Israeli public discourse.

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7 It is recognized that contemporary population estimates can represent another politicized element of the ongoing conflict. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 15–24, offers an insightful analysis of the special factors impacting Christian displacement and emigration from Israel/Palestine.

In January 2004, *Haaretz* reporter Ari Shavit interviewed eminent Israeli historian Benny Morris. The interview made headlines around the world, mostly from Morris's justification of ethnic cleansing as a legitimate wartime action. Acknowledging that his perspective would be unwelcome in many quarters, Morris stated the strategic purposes for his position: "I feel sympathy for the Palestinian people, which truly underwent a hard tragedy. I feel sympathy for the refugees themselves. But if the desire to establish a Jewish state here is legitimate, there was no other choice. It was impossible to leave a large fifth column in the country." The historian goes on to critique the strategic decisions of David Ben-Gurion, an early military leader and Israel's first prime minister: "If Ben-Gurion had carried out a large expulsion and cleansed the whole country—the whole Land of Israel, as far as the Jordan River, ... If he had carried out a full expulsion—rather than a partial one—he would have stabilized the State of Israel for generations." Morris then uses these historical judgments as a lens for understanding commentary on contemporary political concerns, especially regarding Israel's present Palestinian population: "The Israeli Arabs are a time bomb. Their slide into complete Palestinization has made them an emissary of the enemy that is among us. They are a potential fifth column. In both demographic and security terms they are liable to undermine the state. So that if Israel again finds itself in a situation of existential threat, as in 1948, it may be forced to act as it did then" (Shavit 2004a).[8]

The threat of transfer (ethnic cleansing) is just one component of what Baruch Kimmerling has termed politicide, "a process that has, as its ultimate goal, the dissolution of the Palestinian people's existence as a legitimate social, political, and economic entity" (2003, 3–4). Calls for transfer and efforts to delegitimize Palestinian political existence do not discriminate between Muslims and Christians. All Palestinians are equally vilified.

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8 Morris's original change in public attitude was announced in a 2002 editorial: "Peace? No Chance," *Guardian Unlimited* (London), February 21, 2002. The 2004 interview, however, created controversy with Morris's open endorsement of "ethnic cleansing" as a matter of security. For important responses to this new level of public discourse in Israel, see Joel Beinin, "No More Tears: Benny Morris and the Road Back from Liberal Zionism," in *Middle East Report* 230 (Spring 2004), and Jonathan D. Tepperman, "An Israeli Who's Got Everybody Outraged," *New York Times*, 17 April 2004.

The Israeli presumption of Palestinian immorality and intransigence—a factor as well in U.S. Middle East policy (Christison 1999, 92–93)—is but one part of the reality shared by Palestinian Muslims and Christians. They are bound by the land and by their shared history—not least the history they have experienced since *al-Nakba* ("the Catastrophe") in 1948 and the expansionist realities of 1967. Although living under a shared threat posed by an overwhelmingly powerful neighbor that is also an occupying military force, all Palestinians live with the same hope of national self-determination. As their numbers wane, however, Palestinian Christians will exercise less and less political authority in Israel/Palestine, placing their vision of Palestinian nationalism in jeopardy.

DIMINISHING DEMOGRAPHICS — EXPANDING VOCATION

Despite their small numbers, Palestinian leadership includes many highly visible Christian individuals. Among these are Jonathan Khuttab (a human rights lawyer based in Jerusalem who is a member of the Israeli, Palestinian, and New York bar associations and co-founder of the Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners), Ghassan Andoni (director of the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People), Naim Stifan Ateek (an Anglican priest and founder of Sabeel, an ecumenical liberation theology center in the West Bank), Abuna Elias Chacour (a Melkite priest in the Galilee whose efforts to build an infrastructure for higher education among Palestinians are supplemented with his role as a crucial liaison between the Palestinian Christian community and the Vatican), and Hanan Ashrawi (prominent legislator and former member of the PLO's negotiations team).[9]

The reputation of both Munib Younan and Mitri Raheb is growing in the North American context. Through their books, speaking tours and guest appearances at ecumenical gatherings, these ELCJHL leaders are beginning to influence North American Christian opinions regarding the conflict in Israel/Palestine. All the while, they emphasize the important

9 Many of these important Palestinian Christian voices were gathered together in an important volume published during the first Intifada (Ateek, Ellis and Ruether, 1992) and later in an important volume that takes account of the beginnings of the second, al-Aqsa Intifada (Sennott 2001).

work they have undertaken in Palestine, pursuing the joint tasks of theological reflection, constructive political engagement, and interreligious dialogue.

Western Christians are likely to view Palestinian Christianity's diminishing numbers as a product of their being situated within a predominantly Islamic (and presumably threatening) context. While recognizing the difficulties inherent to often politicized religious diversity, Christians in Palestine and in the Arab world generally, do not see (for the most part) the relationship between Christianity and Islam as a "clash of civilizations" and do not (necessarily) view the Muslim majority as an existential threat. Instead of a relationship of enmity and co-belligerence, Christians and Muslims in Israel/Palestine experience a symbiotic existence. As the late Palestinian intellectual and Anglican Christian, Edward Said, once observed,

> There are of course distinctly Christian traditions inside the Islamic world. I myself belong to one. But it would be grossly inaccurate to think of them as separate and outside Islam, which includes us all. This, I think, is the most important point of all: Islam is something all Arabs share in, and is an integral part of our identity. I know that I may be speaking for myself when I say that as an Arab Christian I have never felt myself to be a member of an aggrieved or marginal minority. Being an Arab, even for a non-Muslim, means being a member of what the late Marshall Hodgson called an Islamicate world, or culture. Any attempts at severing the tie are, I believe, doomed to failure. (Said 1994, 388–9)

Raheb agrees with Said's assessment of the symbiotic relationship between Palestine's religious communities: "Arab Christians and Muslims share the Arabic culture, history, and language; their fate is intertwined and inseparable. Likewise, Arab Christians are an inseparable part of the world of Islam" (Raheb 1995, 9). Charles Sennott, in his report on the status of the Christian community in Israel/Palestine, recounts a common averment of both Christian and Muslim Palestinians: "We are all brothers here" (2001, 87).

For Raheb, the complexities and hopefulness of relationships between Muslims and Christians in Palestine became clearer during and after the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) siege of Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity in 2002. A few days after the five-week ordeal ended in early May, the

heads of almost all the churches in Israel/Palestine came to inspect the damage done to the church, both by the IDF from the outside and the 200-plus militants held inside. After the patriarchs and bishops prayed with Raheb on the street outside Christmas Lutheran, also damaged in the siege, a Muslim shopkeeper approached him, asking about Father Amjad, a Franciscan friar who lives in the Church of the Nativity compound. The shopkeeper's son, Muhammad, a Hamas member, had been deported to Gaza for resisting the Israeli incursion into Bethlehem and seeking sanctuary in the church. And then the shopkeeper made an unusual request: "Promise to look for Father Amjad at the church and to thank him for me." The man explained that Father Amjad had cared for his son when he had fallen ill during the siege; after checking his symptoms, he brought some scarce medicine and returned often to check his progress. The friendship this young Muslim developed with this Christian had cost him some Muslim friends during the siege. Even so, when Muhammad called from Gaza, he said, "You see, Dad, this is why I want you to go look for Father Amjad and thank him for all he did. He saved my life, and I will remain indebted to him" (Raheb 2004, 33).

The relationship between Palestinian Christians and their Muslim and Jewish neighbors is not without its sometimes violent complexities. When Pope John Paul II made pilgrimage to Jerusalem in March 2000, Bishop Younan was the only Christian leader invited to join Jerusalem's Muslim dignitaries as they formed a receiving line at the Dome of the Rock. Younan was positioned toward the center of the group, and the pontiff must have been puzzled when he came upon this oddity, wearing a black frock and pectoral cross.

> "Lutheran?" he asked. His eyes moved up and down the receiving line, and he spoke softly to me, "The rest, are they all Muslims? And you, a Christian?"
>
> I nodded. "I am Munib Younan, the Lutheran bishop. We have a good relationship in this country between Christians and Muslims."
>
> "Good," Pope John Paul responded. He patted me on the back. "Do everything you can to continue this relationship."

As a Muslim businessman escorted Bishop Younan back to the Redeemer Church, their elation was mitigated. "Take off that cross!" An elderly Muslim man, presumably seeking to protect the sanctity of this holy site, was shouting after them. Younan's escort confronted the man: "Be quiet! ... He is our bishop." Walking on, Younan was confronted by a Jewish settler woman with her four children: "She called out to me and then spat on me several times. 'The cross. The cross. The cross,' she continued to shout as my escort stepped between us" (Younan 2003, xii).

In Israel/Palestine, theological and religious perspectives have political consequences. While these two incidents were later dismissed by leaders within the respective faith communities as "extremism," there is without doubt a real undercurrent of hostility to Christianity and Christians. This reality contributes to a threatening climate for an already embattled Palestinian Christian minority, a fact leading to greater rates of emigration. And the Christians who leave are precisely the ones who will be most needed, should a just peace ever come to this land. The cultural and political implications of Christian emigration are potentially enormous. As American journalist Charles Sennott has observed,

> Important international efforts by Christian churches have been gathering strength to counter the trend of emigration. All of us—Christians, Muslims, and Jews—have a stake in their success. The Christian presence in the Holy Land is a potentially important, possibly essential, voice in the dialogue for peace, but it is a voice that has been reduced to a hoarse whisper. Historically, Christianity has provided a kind of leavening in the Middle East, a small but necessary ingredient acting as a buffer between the Arab world's broad Islamic resurgence and the strands within Israel of a rising ultranationalist brand of Judaism. These two fundamentalist movements, which have fused religion with nationalism, increasingly cast the territorial Israeli-Palestinian conflict in religious terms. If the Christians disappear, the Middle East will become that much more vulnerable to this embittered dichotomy. (2001, xix)

Riad Jarjour, elected general secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches in 1994, notes the importance of the Christian voice in developing the political trajectory of the entire region: "As Christians seek internal renewal and dialogue with Muslims, they raise the spiritual pillars for the integration of Christians into the Arab world, an environment dominated

by Muslims. The basic item on their agenda is to discuss how to build a civil society within which all citizens may find opportunity and freedom to engage creatively in building a common future" (2003, 21). This common future is dependent upon the realization of Palestinian Christians' nationalist vision.

NATIONALISMS, SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS

Theological claims made on the land of Israel/Palestine have political consequences. While a secular case can be made for sharing sacred space, most religious approaches would assume that sharing is not an option. Most specifically, Jewish and Islamic claims are so theologically and geographically similar that they are almost mutually exclusive. These theological foundations inform Israeli and Palestinian theopolitical perspectives, including religious nationalisms, minimizing the possibilities for coexistence.

North Americans, viewing the modern state of Israel and Palestinians longing for their own state, might prefer to see a more explicit wall between 'church' and state in the region's politics. What might not be so readily apparent to North American observers, however, is that the religious nationalism of Israel/Palestine thrives within a *legal* environment of toleration.

From its inception in 1948, the state of Israel has lived with the tension of the state's "Jewish" and "democratic" character. The Declaration of Independence calls for "the establishment of a Jewish state in *Eretz Israel*, to be known as the State of Israel," which will ensure "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race or sex." This tension has been exacerbated by the state's military occupation and de facto annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with its huge Palestinian population inhabiting the land without the rights of citizenship. In contrast, the draft constitution of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), though not necessarily ideal, contains no reference to religion (PNA 1963).

The Declaration of Independence (PNA 1988) and draft Constitution for the State of Palestine (PNA 2003) do include references to religion in

the Palestinian context. The Declaration of Independence expresses several lofty principles of plurality and toleration:

> The State of Palestine is the state of Palestinians wherever they may be. The state is for them to enjoy in it their collective national and cultural identity, theirs to pursue in it a complete equality of rights. In it will be safeguarded their political and religious convictions and their human dignity.... The rights of minorities will duly be respected by the majority.... Governance will be based on principles of social justice, equality and non-discrimination in public rights of men or women, on grounds of race, religion, color or sex.... Thus shall these principles allow no departure from Palestine's age-old spiritual and civilizational heritage of tolerance and religious coexistence.

The Declaration begins with the traditional Islamic invocation, the *bismallah*, and closes with a Quranic recitation. Given Said's assessment of the "Islamicate" culture shared by Christians and Muslims in Palestine, these features can perhaps be read as religiously neutral.

However, the designation of the future state of Palestine as an Islamic entity in the draft Constitution of Palestine, last revised in 2003, is of concern to Palestinian Christians:

> Arabic shall be the official language and Islam shall be the official religion in Palestine. Christianity, and all other monotheistic religions, shall be equally revered and respected. The Constitution guarantees equality in rights and duties to all citizens irrespective of their religious belief. (Article 5)
>
> The principles of Islamic Shari'a shall be a major source of legislation. The civil and religious matters of the followers of monotheistic religions shall be organized in accordance with their religious teaching and their denominations, within the framework of law. (Article 7)

Though good governance is still possible within such an arrangement of legal toleration, this trend of religious nationalism has historically been resisted by Palestinian Christians.

These legal frameworks, both implemented and proposed, have nationalist foundations underneath their bureaucratic applications. An evasive topic for political theorists, "nationalism" has been notoriously difficult to define or analyze. Benedict Anderson has offered the most influential conception of the phenomenon: "the nation ... is an imagined political com-

munity" (1991, 6).[10] No matter how nationalisms are delimited, the boundaries of their imagined internal homogeneity are malleable. As Bruce Masters has noted, "The parameters for inclusion can vary, depending on how the collective identity is constructed or 'imagined'" (2001, 9).

Zionism

First articulated in Theodor Herzl's manifesto, *The Jewish State* (1896), and expanded in the Zionist Conferences held between 1897 and 1948, Zionism gained support in small circles in Western Europe and was very influential in Eastern Europe and Russia. From its beginnings, the movement was shot through with ideological tendencies and factions with conflicting visions and goals. Chaim Weizmann, who led the World Zionist Organization after Herzl's death in 1904, oversaw various strains of the movement, which ranged from socialist Zionism (engine of the *kibbutz* movement) to the militarist Revisionist movement of Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky. Political Zionists worked for an eventual state to be populated by Jews fleeing pogroms and widespread antisemitism; cultural Zionists emphasized the creation of a "spiritual" homeland that would enrich Jewish life in the Diaspora.

Though contested within the Jewish community, Zionism has been an effective means by which a Jewish nationalism can be imagined. In *The Making of Modern Zionism*, Shlomo Avineri concludes that, far from being constitutive of Jewish identity,

> Zionism ... is a post-Emancipation phenomenon. While drawing on a historical bond with the ancestral Land of Israel, it made into an active, historical-practical focus a symbol that had lain dormant, passive thought potent, in the Jewish religious tradition. Jewish nationalism ... was a response to the challenges of liberalism and nationalism much more than a response to merely to anti-Semitism, and for this reason it could not have occurred at any period before the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (1983, 13)

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10 That nations are "imagined" does not in Anderson's usage indicate that they are "invented" or "fabricated," but rather that they are constructed by social actors. Though not without relevant caveats (Purcell 1998 and Lustick 2002), Anderson's understanding of nationalism provides an adequate framework for this discussion.

With the state a new focal point, this new imagining of Jewish nationalism has had profound effects on the Jewish community worldwide. This results, as Anderson observed, in "a curious inversion of conventional genealogy" that starts "from an originary present. World War II begets World War I; out of Sedan comes Austerlitz; the ancestor of the Warsaw Uprising is the state of Israel" (Anderson, 205). As Ian Lustick notes, "'*Livnot ulehivanot*,' 'to build and to be built by,' was a pre-state Labor Zionist slogan" (43, n.13).

The events of 1948 and 1967 changed Israeli political life and its fundamental ideology in distinct ways. With the founding of a Jewish state, the primary goal of political Zionism had been achieved. And with the transformation of associations like the Jewish Agency and Jewish paramilitary groups into official organs of political authority, the pioneering character of Zionism shifted to establishing various bureaucratic institutions. The revolutionary and uncharted nature of the prestate period was replaced by a quest for normalization. The conquest of land in the 1967 war also changed the ideological landscape of Zionism. Israel's victory catalyzed a "Greater Israel" movement convinced that the expansion of the state's borders was theologically inevitable.

Both the inevitability of Israel's expansion and the inevitably resulting Palestinian suffering were anticipated before and during the founding of the Jewish state. As Nur Masalha has demonstrated, "Zionist parties of all shades of opinion ... were in basic agreement about the need and desirability of utilizing the 1948 War to establish an enlarged Jewish state with as small an Arab population as possible" (1999, 218). Prefiguring historian Benny Morris's commentary in 2004, David Ben-Gurion wrote forcibly in 1937 on the possibility of transferring Palestinians out of Palestine for the sake of Jewish benefit:

> We have to stick to this conclusion in the same way we grabbed the Balfour Declaration, more than that, in the same way we grabbed Zionism itself. We have to insist upon this conclusion [and push it] with our full determination, power and conviction. ... We must uproot from our hearts the assumption that the thing is not possible. It can be done. (Masalha, 215)

PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM(S)

There is a relative consensus among world Jewry that the Jewish national project is a legitimate fact. Defending Israel—though the nature of that defense is at times in dispute between left and right, religious and secular—is no longer a question. The Palestinian situation is far more fragmented. As with most forms of modern Arab nationalism, Palestinian nationalism struggles between the poles of secular and religious commitment. Fateh, founded in 1958 and now closely associated with the Palestinian National Authority and the late Yasser Arafat, is an explicitly secular organization that includes Palestinian Christian voices at its highest levels. On the other hand, Hamas, founded in 1987 by, among others, Sheikh Ahmed Yasin and 'Abd al-'Aziz Rantisi (both assassinated by Israel in early 2004), presents an explicitly Islamist alternative for Palestinian nationalism.[11]

Developing within the same historical period as Zionism, thinkers such as Sayyid Ahmed Khan, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Egyptian Muhammad 'Abduh provided the foundations for various approaches to Islamic nationalism. In 1928, an Egyptian named Hasan al-Banna formed a Sunni cultural association, the Muslim Brotherhood. Eventually seeking to establish an Islamic state in Egypt, the theopolitical perspective of the Brotherhood resonated deeply with various segments of the Islamic world. Israel's founding in 1948 proved to be formative for the Brotherhood. While engaged in some direct resistance, Muslim Brotherhood leadership distanced itself from guerilla activity and instead focused on the cultural formation of the next generation. Meanwhile, more militant movements gained popularity. In the 1980s, a synthesis between the previously separate commitments of social change and armed struggle was proposed. The nascent stages of the first Intifada "presented the right moment to translate their new conviction into practice and to assign top priority to the confrontation with the Israeli occupation" (Hroub 2000, 39).

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11 *Fateh*, literally meaning "victory" or "conquest," is also a reverse acronym of *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini,* Palestinian National Liberation Movement. *Hamas*, Arabic for "zeal," is an acronym for *Harakat al muqāwama al-Islamiyya*, Islamic Resistance Movement. An "Islamist" is someone who understands Islam as a system that should influence all spheres of life. Care should be taken to not confuse Islamism with mere militancy or extremism.

The success of Zionism has prompted surprising responses from Palestinian groups. While Fateh has sought a secular, political solution to the conflict by attempting to engage Israel as a dialogue partner, Hamas continues to develop its Islamist ambitions for the land. The Hamas charter states, for instance, that "The nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement is part of its religion" (in Hroub 2000, 274). Attempting to explain this innovative utilization of Islam, Andrea Nüsse asserts that "since its inception, the Arab Palestinian national movement has been emulating the Zionist movement" (1998, 49).[12] While acknowledging the complex, almost symbiotic relationship between Zionism and contemporary Palestinian nationalism, Ilan Pappe, assessing the new historical narratives being produced by both Israelis and Palestinians, concludes that "before the appearance of the Zionist movement, a local national identity had been in the making" (1999, 3). This understanding rejects the canard that Palestinian nationalism is only a derivative of Zionism.

Political Despondency

The violence of the past decades in Israel/Palestine has often been informed by religious commitment. While Palestinian military resistance to Israel—especially in the case of Hamas—has been easily dismissed in western discourse as irrational and unjustifiable terrorism (Sprinzak 1997), violence motivated by religious nationalism is not limited to Palestinians. "Here in Israel, we don't like to say this very loudly, but the radical right Jewish groups have a lot in common with Hamas," says Carmi Gillon, head of the Shin Bet department that uncovered the Jewish Underground and chief of that agency when Prime Minister Rabin was assassinated in 1995 (Stern 2003, 105–6). The Underground drew its numbers from Gush Emunim ("Bloc of the Faithful" or "Believers' Bloc"), a group formed to promote the settlement of Arab land occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. Inspired by the teachings of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, the Gush is dedicated to creating "facts on the ground" that provide ground for a Jewish claim on all of "Greater Israel." Long involved in vigilante violence against Palestin-

12 Nüsse here relies on the insight of Hillel Frisch, "The Case of Religious Emulation: The Nationalization of Universal Religious Doctrine in the Palestinian Fundamentalist Movement," *Middle East Focus* 12/3 (Fall 1990): 18–25.

ians, if the Underground had succeeded in its plot to destroy the Dome of the Rock, many have speculated that the wrath of the entire Islamic world would have been directed at the state of Israel, bringing "in the not-too-distant future, the risk of world conflagration" (Gorenberg 2000, 136).

Just as communities can be imagined, they can be *re*-imagined along different lines. In both the Israeli and Palestinian contexts, proponents of religious nationalism have a political foothold. Even with this foothold, however, the territorial maximalism sought by both Gush Emunim and Hamas has been mitigated by their respective political contexts. This *de facto* marginalization can serve, however, to intensify rather than diminish theopolitical commitments. As Mark Jeurgensmeyer asserts, religious Rightists claim that secular nationalism is in itself "a kind of religion" (2001, 74–75), one that conflicts with the demands of "true" religion.

Where political systems are perceived to be faltering, new systems will rise to take their place. The political systems and nationalisms Palestinians hoped would bring relief from military threat and civilian occupation have failed to provide peace, prosperity and security. Recent years have seen a further erosion of political hope. With the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, it was clear to many that the Oslo process had failed. The fate of Oslo was further sealed with the fitful introduction of the Bush administration's "Roadmap" in April 2003,[13] though it is unclear that the plan will deal fairly with Palestinian concerns.

Palestinian frustration with U.S. intentions was heightened by the non-response of American leaders to Israel's targeted killings of Hamas leaders Yasin and Rantisi in early 2004.[14] At present, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's unilateral disengagement plan—though widely touted in international media as a breakthrough step toward a negotiated settlement—is now a) actively resisted by Sharon's base, including extremist settlers, and

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13 The full name of the peace plan was "A Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict."

14 Both assassinations resulted from missile strikes launched by Israeli Defense Force (IDF) helicopter gunships. Yasin, a quadriplegic, was in his wheelchair by a neighborhood mosque following his morning prayers; Rantisi was riding in a car with bodyguards. For US responses to the first assassination, see Steven Weisman, "A Day When the White House Reversed Stand on the Killing," *New York Times*, 23 March 2004, and Warren Hoge, "U.S. Vetoes U.N. Resolution Condemning Israel for Hamas Killing," *New York Times*, 26 March 2004.

b) understood by Palestinians and confirmed by Sharon senior adviser Dov Weisglass to supply "the amount of formaldehyde that is necessary so there will not be a political process with the Palestinians" (Shavit 2004b). It is still too early to tell if either the November 2004 death of Yasser Arafat or the January 2005 election of Mahmoud Abbas as President of the Palestinian Authority will diminish or heighten Palestinian political despondency.

These events are each underscored by the realities of Israel's Occupation of Palestinian land. The Occupation includes strictures on free movement, curfews, house demolitions, all resulting in widespread poverty. Israel's unabated construction of its "security barrier," the positioning of which has been widely condemned in the international community, is only the latest component of this landscape of politicide. It is within this thorny theopolitical environment that Palestinian Christians have long sought to construct a Palestinian nationalism that will ease the suffering of their greater community.

Historical Christian Involvement in the Nationalist Enterprise

Christians in the Middle East have enthusiastically participated in secular Arab nationalist movements. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, already nascent movements toward this goal began seeking fruition. Christians especially were drawn to the ideals and apparent successes of western intellectual values and governmental structures, systems in which their faith would not designate them as second-class citizens. Mitri Raheb explains the pull of these ideas for Palestinian Christians: "By calling for nationalism, secularism, and socialism, Christians were not just demanding equal rights. They were also calling for a new community in which they could take an active political part. The historical background makes it obvious why Arab Christians could not see any contribution that religion could make to benefit the future of the Middle East" (Raheb 1995, 39).

As nationalisms and secular pan-Arabism developed among Muslim thinkers, Christians took a leading role in this movement: "Michel Aflaq, Antun Sa'Adeh, and others became the founding fathers of many secular

Arab political parties, such as the Ba'ath party, the Syrian National Party, and others. Hoping to achieve equal rights and an improvement in their situation, these Christians even became adherents of the Communist parties of the Middle East." Later, Christians would play integral roles in the formation of the PLO, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (chaired by George Habash), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (chaired by Naef Hawatmeh). "The PLO's persistent and continuous struggle for a Greater Palestine was activated by its conviction that one should strive only for a secular state in which Jews, Christians, and Muslims enjoyed equal rights and coexisted in peace" (Raheb 1995, 40).

Observing Israel's internal situation, historian Zeev Sternhell has concluded that "peace," whether between competing strains of Israeli nationalism or between Israelis and Palestinians, "is a mortal danger to the Zionism of blood and soil, a Zionism that cannot imagine willingly returning even one inch of the sacred territory of the land of Israel" (Sternhell 1998, 343). Palestinian Christians and their sympathetic Muslim neighbors are painfully aware of the deleterious effects of religious nationalism in their own context. If Palestine is established as a secular state, it will, like Israel, have to coexist with its internal bubbling religious passions. In this context, where external political and military menaces are joined with the internal threat of Islamist nationalism, the question for Palestinian Christians like Mitri Raheb and Munib Younan is how their community can shape the malleable imagining of Palestinian nationalism.

A THEOLOGY OF MARTYRIA

Palestinian Christian political activity has not only been directed pragmatically toward self-preservation but has also sought to make positive contributions to the shape of Palestinian nationalism. As Munib Younan is fond of saying, the pulpit has moved into the street.

But the street can be a difficult place for a Palestinian Christian to be, as Younan experienced the day of Pope John Paul's visit to Jerusalem. That afternoon, when Jerusalem's church leaders gathered with the pope at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, having heard of these incidents, comforted Younan with an allusion to the Acts of

the Apostles: "We Christians need to take seriously the theology of *martyria*" (Younan 2003, xiii). In Acts 1:8, Jesus commissions his disciples to be witnesses—*martyres*. Thus, Palestinian Christians, though comprising a distinct and threatened minority, have in Younan's view, a crucial calling in their context. "God calls us to *martyria*, but not to accept the evil that causes suffering. *Martyria* still carries with it a kind of dignity, the same way Jesus' dignity remained intact on the cross." Still, he admits, "Being a minority means being exposed. That is why it is witness in word and deed together; it is witness that exposes one to possible suffering. There is no cheap martyr" (Younan 2003; 48, 47).

According to Baruch Kimmerling, the facility for imagining communities, for contributing to nationalisms, is situated with the "cultural elites": "They create the meanings, the world order and the boundaries of the imagined community, which is one central dimension of nationalism" (2001, 100). With their extensive international relationships and broad cultural and financial resources, Palestinian Christians (and, in particular, Palestinian Lutheran leaders) may be understood as elites with the capacity to re-imagine the community. In the Palestinian context, identification as "elite" does not connote a status of imperviousness to material conditions or a detachment from others in the community. These cultural observations, paired with Younan's reflections on *martyria*, recall the context of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's emboldening claim: "We have for once learnt to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcast, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the reviled—in short, from the perspective of those who suffer" (1972, 17).

Many assume that approaching the political conflict in Israel/Palestine with theological lenses is a recipe for disaster. Nevertheless, ELCJHL leaders have discerned that by faithfully ministering to their people and taking seriously Jesus' call to be ministers of reconciliation will necessarily involve them in some levels of political activity.

Younan's participation in structured interreligious engagement is undertaken with a full understanding of its political import. This is especially true of participation in "trialogue" sessions—intensive conversations shared between Jews, Muslims, and Christians. For Younan, these are opportunities for interfaith engagement and cooperation: "peace education,

based on tolerance, equality, and forgiveness" (Younan 2003, 125). He has sought, for instance, to influence the content of both Palestinian and Israeli school curricula and their depictions of their counterparts.

Beyond meetings between bishops and chief rabbis, the theological reflections of Palestinian laity and parish pastors are linked intimately to the political realities of all people in the region, Palestinian and Israeli. "I believe that a contextual Palestinian theology is nothing else than an attempt to develop a local theology that is positive, relevant, and important for the future of the Holy Land," Mitri Raheb has written. "It is an alternative both to escaping into religious fundamentalism and to discarding religion for secularism" (1995, 43). As Palestinian Christians continue to engage the process of *re*-imagining Palestinian nationalism, these efforts have become part of Palestinian Christian consciousness: "The Arabization of the Christian churches, which began with their leaders, has spread to include theology and education," Raheb writes. "This Arabization will eventually bind the faithful to their church, their society, and their country. At that point they will truly possess the power to be what the Master promised, 'You are the salt of the earth and a light on a mountain'" (1995, 25).

Palestinian Christians have made vital contributions to developing Palestinian capacities for non-violent resistance. Though almost all international observers—and almost all Palestinians themselves—recognize the legitimacy of Palestinian armed resistance to the policies and practices of Israeli occupation, the effectiveness of these tactics has proved negligible.[15] Mubarak Awad, an Anabaptist Palestinian with U.S. citizenship, was expelled from Israel in the 1980s for his role in organizing non-violent resistance. He has gone on to found Nonviolence International, The Center for the Study of Non-Violence in Palestine. Jad Isaac, a Greek Orthodox Christian from the Christian village of Beit Sahour, outside Bethlehem, is now the director of the Applied Research Institute, an agricultural

15 U.N. A/RES/33/24, section 2, for instance, "Reaffirms the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, particularly armed struggle." Furthermore, U.N. A/RES/3246 (XXIX), reaffirms "the legitimacy of the peoples' struggle for liberation from colonial and foreign domination and alien subjugation by all available means, including armed struggle" (Section 3) and "Strongly condemns all Governments which do not recognize the right to self-determination and independence of peoples under colonial and foreign domination and alien subjugation, notably the peoples of Africa and the Palestinian people" (Section 7).

research group in Jerusalem. Before the outbreak of the first Intifada in December of 1987, Isaac was a professor of plant physiology at Bethlehem University. By sharing his gardening expertise with Palestinians on a wide scale, Isaac helped fuel the phenomenon of "Intifada gardens," small plots of land that when farmed intensively could support one family. Reported internationally, Isaac's efforts were rewarded by his being arrested daily between May 17 and June 5 of 1988, and then taken for five months to the Ansar III prison camp, famous for its "interrogations." The underground resistance continued. Finally, in 1989, Israel punished the village of Beit Sahour "by 'emptying' the town for forty-five days, confiscating all household appliances as payment for back taxes" (Burge 2003, 220–222).[16]

The ELCJHL supports many forms of Palestinian non-violent resistance. Additionally, the denomination has actively supported the efforts of international organizations committed to non-violent direct action. These include the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, organized by the World Council of Churches, and Christian Peacemaker Teams, a Mennonite-based movement whose group stationed in Hebron attends weekly worship at the English-language service of Redeemer Lutheran in the Old City of East Jerusalem.

In addition to supporting the major organizations directly supporting Palestinian resistance, the ELCJHL provides economic and cultural alternatives to both international visitors and fellow Palestinians. One development made more important since the precipitous decline of tourism revenue since the beginning of the al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000 has been the cultivation of "alternative tourism" resources that include visits to Palestinian territories, meetings with Palestinian leaders, and Palestinian service providers (drivers, guides, hotels, restaurants). Additionally, two Bethlehem institutions operated on the grounds of Christmas Lutheran Church—the International Center of Bethlehem and the Bethlehem Media Center—provide resources for educating visitors and providing tools of cultural expression for Palestinians living under occupation, a context in which the threat of politicide creates a condition where *existence* is resistance.

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16 The Beit Sahour tax revolt is a centerpiece of Charles Sennott's investigation of Palestinian Christian activity (Sennott 2001).

The ELCJHL is actively continuing the single most important Palestinian Christian contribution to Palestinian nationalism. According to Ilan Pappe, this historic ministry of education has been integral to "the emergence of a national and secular society in Palestine," a development that "was possible only after a fundamental change in the relationship between Palestine's Muslim majority and Christian minority." Pappe continues:

> A very particular group of people facilitated Palestine's entry into this [nationalist] phase of perceptional transformation: ... missionaries teaching in schools opened in the second half of the nineteenth century. Through these schools, the future leaders of Palestinian nationalism were introduced to nationalism, democracy and liberalism. At first only Christians were interested in this secular education, but with the admission of Muslims these schools became the private schools *par excellence* for the elite. (Pappe 2004, 4–5)

Today, the ELCJHL claims just six congregations but boasts five schools. More students—about half Muslim and half Christian—attend its schools than its churches. According to superintendent Charlie Haddad, Jews also would be welcome if they wished to attend. The ELCJHL explicitly understands its ministry of education as a crucial component of Palestinian nationalism: "Our challenge is how we can pursue cooperation in future generations in the right way. We do it in Christian schools. With the weakening of ideologies and of pan-Arabism, we are anxious about how this will work out. Those who have lived together know there is another identity, a common identity" (Younan 2003, 131).

As Palestinian Christians work to infuse their community with new perspectives, new ideas, and new self-understandings, they operate with a wealth of political, cultural and theological resources inherited from their unique history and context. Their efforts to *re*-imagine the community of Palestinians, thus shaping Palestinian nationalism, are exemplified by the work of the ELCJHL. Beyond work being done in their context, however, the embattled Christian community in Israel/Palestine has reached out to its western coreligionists, seeking to garner support for its nationalist programme, a programme the community believes will benefit not only itself but all peoples in the region. Though they have long been at the center of efforts to re-imagine the Palestinian community—acting as "leaven" in what Edward Said accepted as their Islamicate context—they have been

nowhere near the center of western Christian imagination regarding the conflict. Instead, Zionism and the state of Israel are supported steadfastly by western (Christian) nations and, more specifically, their governments. Still, the hope of a new/old form of Palestinian nationalism finds its voice among Christians:

> We are not asking for more statements on the Middle East. We are asking for action—not only for our sake, but also for their own sake.... Citizens of these countries must care that their money be spent not to subsidize the Israeli occupation but to create a just peace in the region.... Christian hope holds firm that it's never too late for faith in action and for acts of compassion. Christian hope does not surrender to the forces of death and despair but challenges them. (Raheb 2004, 155)[17]

17 Mitri Raheb was an ecumenical participant during the 2004 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which authorized "exploration of a *selective* divestment of church funds from those companies whose business in Israel is found to be directly or indirectly causing harm or suffering to innocent people, Palestinian or Israeli" (Kirkpatrick 2004).

APPENDIX 1

	Israel	**Occupied Territories**	**Total**
Greek Orthodox	35,000	40,000	75,000
Latin Catholic *(Maronite, Melkite, Latin-Rite, Other)*	54,000	19,000	73,000
Oriental Orthodox *(Armenian, Syrian, Coptic, Ethiopian)*	2,000	8,000	10,000
Evangelical (Protestant)			
Anglican	1,100	2,500	3,600
Lutheran	----	2,400	2,400
Other	1,500	500	2,000
Total	**93,600**	**72,400**	**166,000**

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States of Witness: An Anthropological Perspective on Palestinian Christian Nationalisms

MICHELLE COHEN

"A nation is a soul. A spiritual principle." Ernest Renan

Robert Smith's timely and essential study brings into relief who or what is often elided in popular and political conceptions of the Middle East, and indeed, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Christian Arabs. Discussing the ways in which Palestinian Christians relate to their Islamic "brothers and sisters" and articulate their own desires and participation in Palestinian nationalist movements is significant not only to scholarly considerations of the subject, or theologically orientated discussions of Christianity in this context, but perhaps more urgently, to the current geo-politic situation in the Middle East and the West's (or at least the U.S.'s) overwhelmingly monolithic and essentialized imagery of the "Arab" or "Palestinian" as Muslim, potentially terrorist, be-robed and veiled: non-modern.

Smith shows that consideration of the roles of Palestinian Christians, specifically of Palestinian Lutherans, offers not only a more complicated view of who or what is a Palestinian, but also, what a specifically *Christian* Palestinian vision and practice brings to the difficult project of Palestinian nationalism. I want to focus particularly on how the *relations* between the Palestinian Christian minority and the Islamic majority Smith presents can be opened up in such a way as to enable us to understand their *conditions of possibility* within the context of these nationalist projects. Additionally, I want to stress, along with Smith, how those within the Palestinian Lutheran community themselves are building other, more hope-

ful, conditions of possibility. Thus Smith's work offers us another *way of thinking* about a conflict that has been predominately framed in terms of dichotomous opposition and unending violence. We need to pursue another route.

A WORD ABOUT ANTHROPOLOGY

Before I begin I would like to ground my discussion in a very brief and partial passage through the logics of anthropological practice. Socio-cultural anthropology is committed to engagement with questions that allow one to imagine how other ways of life, and certain ideas about life—practices, beliefs, organizations, rationalities—are possible (rather than simply true or false, right or wrong). Because of this, anthropologists are sometimes accused of asking obvious questions, both by those who participate in our research and by those outside of the discipline. Asking people about their practices or beliefs that are seemingly so commonplace, immemorial, and true to them that they are assumed to be patently evident often provokes a look of surprise, or pity, toward the anthropologist. Socio-cultural anthropologists generally rely on knowledge that is gathered *in situ*—that is, the knowledge one gets from living, participating, and observing with others in a particular place and time. Therefore, the anthropologist's main product, ethnography, is often filled with detailed discussions of the micro-politics of everyday life—which can range from activities in and around the household, beliefs, ceremonies, social movements, governments and schools—in a way that tries to elicit understanding of the various logics and powers at play in a given social field. Furthermore, rather than taking these "logics" or ways of being-in-the-world as givens, we often try to *make visible* how these logics are produced by social actors and in turn, produce particular kinds of people. I say logics, because within any social aggregation or category, be it religious, national, ethnic, gender, etc, there are many different, competing ideas and desires at work: there are distinct politics to our lives and words.

While not everyone has the desire or time to engage in extended fieldwork or interviews, the larger questions anthropologists ask are salient to all kinds of intellectual work. For example, how do certain ideas and

practices become dominant and others invisible or marginalized? Why are things this way and not another? And how do people accommodate and inflame the frictions, the contestations, and indeed, the pleasures, of sociality in their daily lives?

These anthropological considerations bring me to ask of Robert Smith's paper: How is it that Palestinian Christians have come to be largely invisible to the West in discussions of the Palestinians and their struggles? Furthermore, how is it that Palestinian Christians, and particularly Palestinian Lutherans, can be described to have a "symbiotic" relation to their Islamic "brothers?" Instead of seeing this alliance as "natural" or "inevitable," "true" or "false," or even "desirable," I want to ask how it could be *possible*.

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SPEAK OF NATIONALISM(S)?

Before I explore the questions above, I think that a brief discussion of the concept of "nationalism" and "nationalisms" is helpful. It is a slippery concept, and Smith (12) rightly acknowledges that "nationalism" has been particularly difficult to define or explain by scholars. However, for a paper in large part about "nationalisms," Smith leaves the concept somewhat under-theorized. Despite its analytical amorphousness, the concept of nationalism(s) as an "imagined community" utilized by Smith from Benedict Anderson's 1991 study, can be productively opened up.

In particular, Smith is ambiguous about how he views the relationship between the "state," "nation," and "nationalism." Granted, the distinctions between these phenomena are, like nationalism itself, not very clear in the literature, with "state" and "nation" often used interchangeably.[11] But Smith's presentation of the *kinds* of Palestinian state that could be constructed from different nationalist discourses would benefit from thinking through the distinctions between "nation" and "state" and in particular the question: What does it mean be a "nation" without a particular "state?"

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1 This is in part due to a proliferation of terms regarding the state and nation, such as "state formation," "state culture" "state craft," "nation building," etc. where the distinctions between them are ambiguously demarcated. A discussion of "culture" also further complicates these terms. See Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent's *Everyday Forms of State Formation* and George Steinmetz's *State/Culture* for various discussions about the "state."

I do not have the space to provide a detailed analysis of the concepts "state," and "nationalism," I merely want to raise the specter. But looking at the question as an anthropologist, I argue that both "nationalism" and "state" are complex *processes* that overlap and influence each other in ways that resist normative definitions of the terms. "States" and "nationalism" are so difficult to define in part because of their instability as processes; they are always moving. *One must study not the thing itself, but its movement through time and space.* One might think of the "state" as putting the aspirations and desires of a dominant national vision into institutionalized—*but not uncontested*—power. It is important to ask not only what kinds of imaginaries Palestinian Christians are putting forth, but rather, how these imaginaries intersect or significantly move away from—*contest*—other forms of Palestinian nationalism.

While it may be weak on defining the processes of nation and state, Smith's paper does contribute to the difficult work of analyzing this dynamic process of imagination. I now turn to a more concrete discussion of Palestinian Christian nationalisms, imagined communities, and last but not least, to hope.

BUILDING A NATIONAL COMMUNITY: CONTESTATION, SOLIDARITY, AND NEGOTIATION

How do we define community? Turning to the notion of "imagined communities" that Smith utilizes in his discussion about nationalism, I ask what it means in more specific terms to say that a nation or nationalism is "imagined," particularly in the case of Palestinians. What are the borders of inclusion and exclusion? What connects us to one person or another? In what bodies, histories, objects, and geographies does "Palestinian-ness" lie? As Smith states in a footnote (13), to say a nation is "imagined" is to argue that nationalisms, rather than given "natural" entities, are constructed by social actors—and thus are sites of struggle, contestation, and process. If a nation is "imagined" by social actors—all of which presumably don't

have the same goals, visions, and desires—then alliances between people and communities are always *made* and cannot be assumed.

Benedict Anderson, expanding on what he means by imagined communities writes, "...It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them..." (Anderson 1991: 6). Thus, proximity, face-to-face contact and experience with others are not necessary requirements for communal, indeed national, feelings. Although this statement probably seems quite obvious, I make it to highlight that alliances of nationality, of community, of nationalism, cannot be easily assured. Ties of solidarity and partnership are varied and multiple. They *can* arise from the sharing of space and experiences with family, neighbors and friends. The example Smith uses of the Muslim shopkeeper's son's concern for a Franciscan friar during the siege of Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity is one such example. But ties can also arise from religious or political affiliation, ethnicity, gender or nationality, and all of them intersect in different ways to produce particular, and sometimes unexpected, affinities. Imaginary communities are built upon what is intangible and seemingly removed from space and time (such as histories and memories), as well as concrete day-to-day relations. If an imagined community does not exist apart from the practices of everyday life, what happens when, literally, the grounds on which various Palestinians move through life are different? If 60% of Palestinian Christians are living in the Diaspora, how do the various places and nations around the globe where Palestinians live help to create differing visions of nationalism? How does exile influence nationalist imaginaries?[22] And how might the Palestinian Lutheran movement be productively tied to these other, proliferating, nationalisms?

Smith uses the word "nationalisms" as do I, suggesting that there are, at least potentially, multiple ways of imagining a nation both within the Palestinian community as a whole and among Palestinian Christians in particular. This assumes that the process of asserting a national identity is uneven, and never-ending. Perhaps one should speak of "imagin*ing*

2 See anthropologist Glenn Bowman's article, 'A Country of Words': Conceiving the Palestinian Nation from the Position of Exile, in *The Making of Political Identities* ed. Ernesto Laclau. London: Verso, 1994.

communities rather than "imagined" precisely because it demands continual renewal and is subject to permanent challenge. Thus while certain threads of continuity may remain, other aspects of this imaginary community will be unanticipated, which in itself, is a hopeful thought. One way of exploring this rough, shifting terrain is by posing the following questions: What are the losses, accommodations, and amnesias that must take place in order for Palestinian Christians to claim a "symbiotic" relationship with Palestinian Muslims? What is at the same time, re-*membered*, built, and created to forge these alliances? Whose voices are heard and whose are muffled in the background? While Smith begins to discuss the different nationalisms in parts of his paper, the social analysis elicited by some of the above questions is left up to the reader's imagination.

Although Smith provides some historical description of Arab Christian nationalism, and points to certain moments of tension and strife, as well as ideological differences that are difficult to surmount, the primary tenor of the paper leaves us with a feeling of overall unity that beckons explanation. We are left with utterances that unite Christian and Muslim Arabs under the banner of "symbiotic existence," "shared culture and history," and "brotherhood" which seem to gloss over any antagonisms. I wonder *how* and *when* it came to pass that the relationship between Arab Christians and Arab Muslims could be described as "symbiotic" and placed under the banner of "brotherhood." I am not talking about outlining a history of "what happened" in the common sense of the term. I am talking about discussing the politics of that history: a history that is embedded in social relations and not solely in facts to be plucked and ordered.

In Smith's usage of materials by Said, Raheb, and others, the statements of "brotherhood" and alliance are taken as given fact, and the complexities of that relationship are brushed over. It may be that Said and Raheb understand the relations between Christians and Muslims to be one of brotherhood. As an anthropologist, I ask not whether or not this statement is "accurate," but what were the social conditions of its articulation. *How did this come to be presented as historical truth?* Often what we take to be "tradition" or practices and beliefs legitimated by "historical truth" or "ancient customs," are more a product of "invented tradition" than some-

thing that existed in the distant past.[33] That is, tradition, rather than being immemorial, is a product of specific intersections of power and desire that can be quite recent. This is not to say that the alliances, solidarity, and community between Christian and Muslims are not *real*, affective bonds that were present in the past. But how have these alliances changed over time? Has the relationship between Muslims and Christians always been described as "symbiotic" by certain people? If not, what are some of the other ways this relationship has been framed? These sorts of questions are left at the margins of Smith's inquiry, but deserve considerable attention if we consider what is at stake in Christian Palestinian national imaginings.

Since nationalism, like any communal discourse, is always constructed along lines of inclusion and exclusion, I wonder who and what practices are left out of these discourses. Anthropologist Claudio Lomnitz has argued that nationalism cannot simply be conceived as the "horizontal comradery" or "brotherhood" that Benedict Anderson posits because "it [nationalism] systematically distinguishes full citizens from part citizens or strong citizens from weak ones" (Lomnitz 2001: 12). Thus not everyone "belongs" to nationalism equally. Smith shows us how a nationalist vision is being produced by a particular group of Palestinians, but there is little discussion of the activity of this vision: what kind of Palestinian citizen is being fashioned in the discussions of Palestinian Christians? Nationalism is not just an abstract concept, but a material force wielded between people. It is productive and constitutive, not just of nations but of kinds of persons. Who has been left out, reinterpreted, and forgotten in the forging of this alliance? The very notion of what it is to be Palestinian is at stake.

Where does the Palestinian Lutheran movement leave us with regard to nationalism and the relations between Israelis and Palestinians? I am not sure what a contextual Palestinian theology would look like as it sits between religious fundamentalism and secularism, nor is it entirely clear in what ways it would be articulated to Palestinian nationalisms. But the Palestinian Lutheran movement that Smith has presented is working to shift the struggle for Palestinian nationalism from seemingly intractable

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3 The idea of invented traditions comes from the volume *The Invention of Tradition* by British historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1983.

violence and polarity, toward social justice, religious freedom, and polyvocality. This is an incredibly hopeful response to a situation that has been seen as inevitable and a reconciliation process that is often constructed as a failure before it begins. Indeed, an emphasis on dialogue, non-violent resistance, and mutual responsibility is not inconceivable for Israelis and Palestinians. It is possible, even as these approaches *appear* to be an impossible, weak, or simplistic answer to the situation. But as I have tried to illustrate in this response, *anything* is possible, and we need another vision. Perhaps the minority presence that Palestinian Christians have in Palestine and the Arab world is, instead of a limitation, an asset; a door is opened that perhaps would have remained shut or unseen.

AT LAST, A WORD ABOUT LOVE

All this emphasis on contestation and negotiation, when speaking about discursive struggles like those that fall under the banner of nationalism, leave one with a dismal view of sociality and bitter taste in the mouth. And indeed, social and political contestation *can* be brutal, as any peek into the news affirms. Questions relating to diversity, difference, and belonging are essential to thinking about any kind of nationalist project. As Smith points out, these issues are at the core of Christian Palestinian nationalisms in a situation where the most visible national imaginaries are less than inclusive of difference.

If a democratic state is desired where religious and other differences are not just tolerated, but fostered, then Palestinian Christians are faced with building a consensus that agrees to disagree. As the political theorist Chantal Mouffe has written, "I think that the consensus needed in a liberal democratic society will always be what I call a conflictual consensus. We agree on what makes us citizens, what links us together, what certain values link us; but when it comes to *defining* those values, to *interpreting* them, there will always be competition" (Mouffe 1999: 179). Thus when I stress *agonism* and conflict as essential to any kind of community, I am not merely being negative or cynical. Rather, the very idea of a society that encourages debate and respects difference is a *utopian* one, if difficult.

Therefore, I want to suggest that the practices of critique—challenging, questioning, nudging—whether in the arena of overtly politicized spheres, in our homes, or in a forum such as this one, can also necessarily be an act of love. By this I mean love as responsibility, vigilance, and the fostering—rather than the cutting off—of response (response-ability), as the philosopher Kelly Oliver has put it (Oliver 2001). I mentioned hope above, and the Palestinian Christians Smith describes leave us with this feeling. It is a politically and emotionally necessary one.

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Religious Nationalism(s) and the Problem of being "Christian" in the Palestinian Context

KHURRAM HUSSAIN

I would like to frame my response to this thought provoking essay around a rather peculiar incident involving the Lutheran Bishop Dr. Munib Younan that takes place right after his audience with the Pope at the Dome of the Rock. As recounted by Smith on page 10 of his essay:

> As a Muslim businessman escorted Bishop Younan back to the Redeemer Church, their elation was mitigated. "Take off that cross!" An elderly Muslim man, presumably seeking to protect the sanctity of the holy site [the Dome of the Rock], was shouting after them. Younan's escort confronted the man: "Be quiet! He is our bishop." Walking on, Younan was confronted by a Jewish settler woman with her four children: [Says Younan] "She called out to me and spat on me several times. 'The cross. The cross. The cross,' she continued to shout as my escort stepped between us."

I find this incident peculiar because, despite the almost intractable conflict and difference of opinion that characterizes much of the relationship between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Muslims, there appears to be at least this one thing, the "cross," that some in both camps regard with equal disgust. What does this strange confluence of opinion signify? Or put another way, how and why does the "cross" become the site of such visceral abjection?

I believe that at least a provisional response to this question can be articulated through an analysis of the notion and practice of nationalism as such in the Palestinian context. Nationalism is not merely the imagining or re-imagining of community but rather, more importantly, is that set of normalizing projects by which the community so imagined is narrativized,

historicized and ultimately created in order that it can serve as the source for claims to power.

Smith's account of the Christian missionary schools and other educational contributions to Palestinian life documents just such projects through which Palestinian Christians seek to influence and participate in the creation of a just and inclusive national community. But nationalist projects are also conditioned by the conceptual grammar of their context. They are never merely about the "we-making" processes of internal development but are also about the limitations and conditions imposed from without.

While the escalation in a religious form of nationalism among the Palestinians can be located in the near past, one must not forget that religious nationalism as such has been an existential fact in Palestine ever since the creation of the Zionist state in 1948. As Smith points out, this nationalism was explicitly predicated on creating a "cleansed" homeland for the Jews: "We must uproot from our hearts the assumption that [the transfer of all Arab Palestinians out of Palestine] is not possible. It can be done" (14). Claims to the ownership of sacred land have from the very beginning of this conflict thus tended to circulate around notions of religious sanction and an articulation of sovereignty grounded in a nationalized religious identity. Christians may have been the "leaven" in the Islamicate world in ages past, but for many Palestinian nationalists their presence now merely frustrates their own ideological fantasies of a cultural and religious articulation of a "pure" Islamic nationality that is seen as a pre-requisite for sovereignty. The Palestinian Christian represents a constitutive defect, an impurity that needs to be cleansed before Palestine can emerge as a self-conscious nation.

Nationalism only becomes viable as a political project when a "nation" is created as an effective and legitimate narrative for both internal consumption and for external intelligibility. The Christian community represents that irreducible residue of unintelligibility that cannot be properly narrativized and accounted for either in the grand national imaginings of the quasi-religious nationalism(s) now prevalent in the Holy Lands, or in the common sense western discourse on Muslim backwardness and barbarity that sustains the unflinching support of Americans, and of the American

government, for the "democratic" state of Israel. Smith rightly bemoans the invisibility of Palestinian Christians in the eyes of their western religious counterparts. But such invisibility is hardly accidental, nor can it be removed by merely, figuratively, shouting at the top of one's lungs.

The relevant factor here, as I indicated before, is discursive intelligibility. And for the West in general, the Palestinian Christian has none. Alternatively, it is the very visibility of a symbol of Christianity, the cross, in the socio-geographical context of Israel/Palestine itself that elicits vehement calls for its erasure, its removal from the scene, on the part of bystanding partisans. Christian emigration out of the Holy Lands is the existential manifestation not merely of Palestinian suffering but also, as Smith rightly points out, of the increasing irrelevance of Christianity to the nationalist narratives of Palestinian self-understanding.

Smith is understandably perturbed by the rise of religious nationalism, and the alternative possibility of a secular nationalism is treated with much optimism and hope in his text. I am afraid I do not share such optimism. I believe an important question that remains un-engaged in this paper is the status of nationalism as such as a viable conceptual framework for the construction and governance of just communities. Does secularism of the western, liberal kind truly provide adequate safeguards against the totalizing and normalizing projects of nation-states? As has been apparent to me as a Muslim living in the US, even ostensibly advanced secular nation-states are not immune to jingoism and state-sanctioned bigotry. Smith himself points out that even "the religious nationalism of Israel/Palestine thrives within a legal environment of religious toleration" (12). Are the politics of modern nation-states, or the politics of aspirations to nation-stateness, doomed to forever recapitulate into totalizing narratives of nationality in which erasure and politicide are not exceptions to the rule but rather constitutive of the nationalizing process itself? I believe that this is a question well worth discussing.

I would like to conclude my remarks by recounting a story which may have some value for our present discussion. Back in India and my native Pakistan, there is a legend associated with the arrival of Parsis in the Indian subcontinent. These Parsis were escaping persecution in their native Iran and sent a representative to the emperor at the time asking for refuge

in his land. The emperor is said to have sent them a bowl almost brimming over with milk in response to their request for refuge. The bowl filled with milk signified the emperor's sympathy for their plight and his desire to assist them, but also reflected the emperor's reluctance to do so because his land was already too full of his own subjects, with not enough resources to spare. The legend goes that the Parsis returned the bowl of milk to the emperor and upon tasting it, the emperor noticed that it was sweet. The Parsis had mixed sugar into the milk suggesting that they will mix in with his population as sugar in milk, taking up no extra room, remaining for all practical purposes invisible, but making the experience of community sweeter for everyone. The emperor allowed them to stay, and so they have stayed to this day.

In the meantime, the Indian sub-continent has been the sight of much religious violence, a traumatic partition into India and Pakistan, and political and sectarian upheavals. And all the while, the Parsis have stayed aloof and politically invisible, while continuing to enrich their local communities with disproportionate participation in social work, charity, artistic development and the like. Having experienced first hand the vicissitudes of political community-making in their native Iran, and the resulting near erasure of their community from its native land, the Parsis have shunned politics while continuing to do their bit in "sweetening" the milk in which they reside the best they can. Perhaps, and I say this not as an opinion but as a point for discussion, the Palestinian Christian response to the increasingly nationalized context of their social life could be well served by following this paradigm.

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"Palestinian Christians and Nationalism(s)": *Religious* Resources for Conflict-Resolution?

IRFAN KHAWAJA

In "Palestinian Christians and Nationalism(s): Religious and Secular," Robert O. Smith presents a richly-detailed account of the predicament of Arab Christians in contemporary Israel/Palestine, with special emphasis on the struggles of the Palestinian Lutheran community, and more specifically, the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). My comment here focuses on what strikes me as an ambiguity in the paper's treatment of the idea of a specifically *religious* resource for the resolution of political conflict.

I opened by praising Smith's account of the Arab Christian "predicament," but in a sense that understates the praise I mean to convey. A "predicament" is a situation in which one passively finds oneself, but although Palestinian Christians find themselves in a predicament, judging from this paper, their response to it has been anything but passive. Those of us who are mostly spectators of the conflict are often tempted to reduce "Israel and Palestine" to an unending series of bombings, military actions, or (at best) tourist-like reminiscences; it is easy to forget the fact that everyday Israeli and Palestinian life goes on, and to ignore the importance of the institutions through which it does.

And so it is valuable to be reminded of the unobtrusive presence of the Christian "educational and cultural institutions that strive to serve all Palestinians" (3), as well as the quiet but determined work undertaken by the "highly visible Christian individuals" described throughout the paper (e.g., 8-11, 18-19, 20-21, 23). The Catholic philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre has written, in what would seem a very different context: "It is in key part in

the lives of families, parishes, schools, clinics, workplaces, and local neighborhood communities that any particular conception of the good achieves recognizable form"[1]. What I find most attractive about Smith's account is the way in which it allows us to recognize just such a conception as expressed in the Palestinian Christian context.

I have so far followed Smith in stressing the specifically *Christian* dimension of this context, but that very fact moves me to express a certain puzzlement. In what respect (if any) is the politics he describes in the paper a specifically religious or Christian one? To what degree does it differ (if at all) from a secular one? These questions get their urgency from the paper's apparent rejection of a purely secular politics in favor of what Smith calls a "contextual theology."

It probably goes without saying that the term "secular" is a highly contested one, meaning that the concept itself is as controversial as the controversies in which it appears.[2] For present purposes, I adopt the definition of the term that appears in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "Secularism is the doctrine that morality should be based solely on regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life, to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or in a future state." By this definition, a *religious resource* would be one drawing on "considerations drawn from belief in God or a future state," and a *Christian resource* would be a religious resource drawing on a specifically Christian conception of those things.

It seems to follow that to qualify as distinctively Christian, a religious resource would have to make some significant reference to the *supernatural character* of Christian morality. But if so, it is unclear in what respect the Christian communities that Smith describes draw on (or ought to draw on) specifically religious, as opposed to secular, resources – either for the effectuation of their political ends, or for formulating those ends in the first place.

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1 McIntyre, Alisdair, "The Privatization of Good: An Inaugural Lecture." 1990 reprint. *The Liberalism-Communitarianism Debate: Liberty and Community Values*, ed. C.F. Delaney. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994), 12.

2 The literature on secularism is vast, but for an interesting contrast relevant to the present discussion, contrast MacIntyre 1994 with Lewis 1993. For a standard collection on the relationship between religious and secular politics from the perspective of contemporary Anglo-American political philosophy, see Weithman 1997.

Take, for instance, disputes about property rights. Much of the Israel/Palestine dispute concerns the question: who owns what—and by what right? The Israeli government administers a complex system of land regulation in the Occupied Territories intended to facilitate the seizure and settlement of what Palestinians regard as their own land; Palestinians, in turn, regard these seizures as a major grievance and source of frustration.[3] Even in Israel proper, Palestinians object to the fact that the Jewish National Fund owns real estate in Israel "in the name of the Jewish people"; meanwhile, many Israelis regard this either as an innocuous legal fiction or as a non-negotiable necessity.

Such conflicts concern the normative principles governing the legitimate acquisition, ownership and transfer of property. To resolve them, we need a theory of property rights and rectificatory justice, and a way of translating both into practice.[4] . It is clear why such a task would call for normative work in political philosophy and legal theory, but not clear (to me) what contribution theology would make. In fact, I'm inclined to think that theological claims are what make the conflict as intractable as it is.

To the extent that Smith sees a place for theology, he does so in the section of the paper on the "theology of *martyria*" (19-24). Here he quotes the Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah as saying "We Christians need to take seriously the theology of martyria," referring to Acts 1:8, where "Jesus commissions his disciples to be witnesses—martyrs" (20). Later Smith quotes Munib Younan: "God calls us to martyria, but not to accept the evil that causes suffering. Martyria still carries with it a kind of dignity, the same way Jesus' dignity remained intact on the cross" (20).

Acknowledging the deep moral gravity of these statements, I find the notion of *martyria* problematic even when voluntarily practiced by those called to it. For the notion seems to me to lead to an irresolvable dilemma. If we take *martyria* literally, in terms of the Gospel's depiction of the Crucifixion, we seem to be led to a politics that makes no pretense of succeed-

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3 B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Terriorties. *Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank*. http://www.btselem.org/English/Publications/Summaries/Land_Grab_2002.asp

4 Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), and Heller, Mark A. and Nusseibeh, Sari, *Trumpets, No Drums: A Two-State Settlement of the Israel-Palestinian Conflict* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1991).

ing at the task of earthly political success. But even if we take it less literally, the idea of *martyria* still seems tenuously related to the achievement of earthly goods like liberty or prosperity, and so seems of limited value as a strategy for political success.

We may wish to regard the idea of "dignity" as *martyria's* essential feature, and think of that as the moral basis of a non-violent campaign against the Israeli Occupation. That is a fair claim, but not a distinctively Christian or religious one. Pagan philosophers like Aristotle have often spoken in purely secular terms of the nobility (*to kalon*) of the virtuous person under conditions of duress, but such conceptions of nobility are decidedly not a form of martyrdom.[5] If *martyria* is to mean something distinctive, it must mean something distinctively Christian, and if so, it must get its meaning from the story that inspired it—namely the New Testament account of the Crucifixion. And that, of course, leads us back to the initial problem.

I don't want to overstate my case. While I do not think that theology has a clear contribution to make in resolving the conflict, I happen to agree that "Palestinian Christians have made unique contributions to developing Palestinian capacities for non-violent resistance" (21). In fact, I would go so far as to say that some of the unique features of the ELCJHL may explain why that is so. But this is less a theological point than a moral fact, comprehensible in purely secular terms, about the psychology and sociology of moral virtue as fostered by (certain) Christian churches. As a secular ethicist, my guess is that there is some entirely secular feature of Palestinian Christian churches (or more specifically the ELCJHL) that inculcates the moral virtues, discipline and solidarity required for the pursuit of common goods. I would also venture the (perhaps counter-intuitive) hypothesis that such churches achieve political success without the assistance of theology.[6] Smith quotes Bishop Younan as saying that "the pulpit has moved into the street" (19). I wonder whether a de-emphasis on theology is not an inevitable consequence of that move.

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5 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1985), 1100b33-1101a12 and Kelly Rogers, "Aristotle's Conception of *To Kalon*," *Ancient Philosophy*, 13/2 (Fall 1993): 355-371.

6 For an interesting historical example of this phenomenon, see Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

This latter possibility sheds interesting light on what many (and I think, Smith) have taken to be the failure of secularism in Palestinian and more generally Arab politics. In assessing such claims of failure, I think it's worth remembering that even at its best, Palestinian secularism was a strange brew of secular and religious ingredients: authoritarianism, the cult of personality, and aspirations to theocracy both convinced and opportunist—all leavened by a dash of terror, a pinch of rabble-rousing, and endless, aimless factionalism.[7] We should be careful not to conflate an idiosyncratic form of quasi-secularism with secularism as such.

In my view, the failures of Palestinian politics cut across religious and secular lines, and Smith's account of the ELCJHL serves to expose an important aspect of the problem. Clearly, organizations like the PLO, Hamas and Hezbullah lack what organizations like the ELCJHL evidently have: a workable conception of the common good, and the moral resources to strive for it in a dignified way. Human beings are, as Aristotle famously put it, political animals. What I think we learn from Smith's account is that Palestinian Christian churches are better able to express our political nature than the more familiar political organizations that currently preside over Palestine.

The deep question is, "Why?". But I am unconvinced that theology can answer it. The answer, I think, lies in the difference between conceptions of political life based essentially on reason and individual rights, and those based on force—an eminently secular distinction that could stand to be more rigorously applied to discussions of Arab politics. It would, of course, be a mild paradox were evangelical Christian churches to bring such a politics to fruition where avowed secularists have not. But paradoxical or not, it would, in my view, be "good news" all the same.

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7 Contrast the sanguine account of the PLO's "Sunni Muslim cultural ethos" in Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 2nd ed (New York: Vintage. 1980), 159-161 with that of Christopher Hitchens, "Arafat's Squalid End: How he wasted his last thirty years." *Slate* (November 17, 2004) http://slate.msn.com/id/2109860/

KOINONIA XVII (2005) 51-56

Holy Land/Holy People: Koinonia Forum Response

CALLIE PLUNKET-BREWTON

What is "holy" about the Holy Land? Ancient narratives tell us that the founding events of three different religions occurred in that land. Do such events imbue a land with holiness? Would we be able to sense that ineffable quality by the visiting the sites where supposed events took place? What is it that sanctifies one group's claim to the land and declares another's claim void? These are a few of the questions I pondered when I was asked to respond to Mr. Smith's paper. I have focused on these particular issues related to the land because I was asked to speak to Old Testament perspectives of the land and the ownership of the land.

According to the texts: land in the Old Testament is holy when the people who live in it are holy. Note the warning to the people of Israel if they do not follow the law in the book of Leviticus: "The land will vomit you out for defiling it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you" (Lev. 18:28). Already, however, we come to the most tormented issue about the land in the Old Testament: the divine sanction of expansionistic conquest of the land of Canaan and the slaughter of its inhabitants. In a piece written by Naim Stifan Ateek, he notes that particular anguish of Palestinian Christians who hear these narratives of the conquest of the land.[1] If the Jews are the chosen people of God, then the Palestinians must be the Canaanites, and, any action taken against them must be justified. Benny Morris, the eminent Israeli historian, defends ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians as a legitimate wartime action. Smith quotes Morris: "If Ben-Gurion had carried out a large expulsion and cleansed the whole country...he

1 Naim Stifan Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989).

would have stabilized the State of Israel for generations" (7). Is it the case that one finds in the Bible further justification for Benny Morris' "solution" to the danger that Palestinians represent to the state?

I do not think that it is the case that the Old Testament supports the position of Benny Morris. I do want to make clear that anything an Old Testament scholar might say about Old Testament perspectives on the land must also include some discussion of conquest. At the same time, I also want to make clear that the practice of expansionistic conquest was declared defunct in the book of Judges. After promising to wipe out the inhabitants of the land throughout most of the Pentateuch and into the book of Joshua, in Judges God declares that the inhabitants of the land will now remain there, alongside the Israelites (Jgs. 2:3). In this text, the people of Israel are no longer given the promise of an empty land, a clean slate on which they can build their holy society.

Holy society is the stated goal of the original conquest.[2] This goal for the people of Israel is stated explicitly throughout the Old Testament: they were to be a nation unlike any other nation. That was the goal of the law. Terence Fretheim writes of the Israelites' foundational experience at Sinai:

> It needs to be stressed that the bulk of the law belongs to the sphere of creation. In view of the symbiotic relationship between the cosmic and societal orders, the law is a means by which the divine ordering of chaos at the cosmic level is actualized in the social sphere, whereby God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven.[3]

The goal of a holy society, in which God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven, is the highest goal for a religious society. The logistics of how to accomplish such a feat as well as the specific details that make up God's will is much more difficult. The ways in which the ancient people of Israel dealt with these issues changed through time and in reaction to new situations.

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2 Whether or not this was the clear goal of the group, or groups, that perhaps settled in the land or perhaps were living there already as disparate units that came together later, is impossible to know. At the textual level, the goal of the conquest was a holy society.

3 Terence Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation (Louisville: KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 204.

Within this complex of views on the land and of the relationships between people who dwell in the land, one does find two overarching themes in the Old Testament to which one might turn for a helpful word. The first theme is that the land belongs to God and not to human beings at all. This theme is implicit in the gifts of the first fruits of the land to God, and, throughout Deuteronomy, the Israelites are instructed to "keep" the law that "it may go well" with them in the land (e.g., Deut. 5:32-33). A theme related to God's ultimate ownership of the land is the concern for the wellness of the land. Even within the instructions for warfare, one finds the prohibition against destroying trees in any area under siege (Deut. 20:19-20).

A second thread that runs throughout various treatments of the land in the Old Testament is the just treatment of the vulnerable, described as "the alien, the orphan, and the widow." In the book of Leviticus, one reads: "The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (Lev. 19:34). This love of the vulnerable and the alien in their midst is a matter of life or death for the people in the eyes of the ancient prophets. Jeremiah proclaims:

> For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you act justly one to another, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors. (Jer. 7:5-7)

The presence or absence of God in the land depends upon the manner in which the people treat the most helpless members of their society, and it is the presence of God, surely, that makes a land holy or unholy. One might suggest that the injunction is focused on the members of their own society, but the inclusion of the "alien" in this list precludes making such a judgment.

As I pondered my response to this complex topic of Palestinian Christians and nationalism, I wondered whom exactly I was addressing. What was the result that I sought in my brief examination of this theme? There are two answers that come to mind. The first is that it might be helpful when envisioning a way forward to consider that Old Testament perspec-

tives on the land do not exclude sharing space. They do exclude the unethical treatment of one's neighbor within that space. Religious commitments need not lead to violent extremism but may lead to an extremism of neighborliness and *martyria*, according to Michel Sabbah, the Latin Patriarch to whom Mr. Smith refers. It is this kind of extremism, the extremism of neighborliness, that the so-called secular west would do well to adopt.

As a North American, who is influenced by western media and western views, there are aspects of the Palestinian responses to their neighbors of which I am embarrassingly ignorant. When Mr. Smith spoke of this "fundamentally shared reality (Palestinian Christians and Muslims)" and pointed out that this was not a "fundamentally antagonistic one presumed by some western perspectives," I wondered at the role of this Christian denomination, the ELCJHL, which is relatively new to the area and is sponsored by Lutheran bodies in northern Europe. How does this process of the "Arabization" of the Christian churches in Israel/Palestine look within this context? What exactly is meant by the term "Arabization"?

I am also interested to hear more about Mr. Smith's statement, "[T]hey also live with the same hope of national self-determination" (7). Is this the same hope shared by all Palestinians? As the divide between extremists and moderates grows, exacerbated by the emigration of so many of the moderates, is there still one fundamentally shared reality and one hope of national self-determination? How has the shrinking of their numbers affected the work of the Christian churches?

In closing, the second answer to my question concerning my purpose is related to the word "neighbor." In the New Testament, a teacher of the law asks Jesus, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?". Jesus returns his question with a question, "What is written in the law?". The teacher of the law then joins two Old Testament texts, Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 18:19—"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." When told he has answered wisely, the teacher asks another question, "Who is my neighbor?". Jesus answers him with the story of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37). He tells of a man robbed and beaten and left for dead on the side of the road between Jericho and Jerusalem. Three men pass the wounded man and only the last one stops

to help. After Jesus tells the story, he asks, "Which of these men...was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?". The teacher answers, "The one who showed him mercy." The central issue for all of us is not "who is my neighbor?" but "how will I be a good neighbor?". Perhaps when we live with that question in the forefront of our minds, all of our lands can be called "holy."

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Pernicious Prophecy

LAWRENCE M. STRATTON

For over a century, the subject of peace in Palestine has been the focus of an endless stream of manifestos, declarations, agreements, letters of understanding, commissions, mandates, white papers, inquiries, reports, U.N. resolutions, charters, peace accords, and so forth. Walter Laqueur's *Israel-Arab Reader* contains over 150 such documents, for example.[1] People opining on the subject should note that even someone with the wisdom of Solomon, such as Solomon himself, had trouble bringing long-term stability to the region. Journalist Arnaud de Borchgrave has soberly observed that "An optimist in the Middle East is someone who is almost always wrong while a pessimist is usually an optimist with experience."[2]

Robert O. Smith's important presentation, "Palestinian Christians and Nationalism(s): Religious and Secular," describes the valuable leavening role of Palestinian Christian communities. Seeking to take "Jesus' call to be ministers of reconciliation" seriously, Palestinian Christians are promoting peace between Jews and Arab Muslims in the troubled region (20). For example, Smith chronicles Munib Younan's "trialogue" discussion programs between Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Younan's goal has been to seek interfaith "peace education, based on tolerance, equality, and forgiveness" (20-21). This quest for a longstanding and just peace within the region provides a powerful hope.

Whereas the Christians in Palestine that Smith describes have provided a leavening influence on the whole land, many American Christians have inflamed Middle East tensions under the banner of "Christian Zionism," an ideology that approaches the Middle East crisis, "through Armaged-

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1 Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, eds., *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict* 6th ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2001).

2 Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Iraqi Palmistry," *Washington Times*, 3 February 2005, A19.

don scenarios."[3] (Christian Zionism arises from the theological rubric of dispensationalism that divides history into separate covenants that culminate in Armageddon.)[4] As described by Roman Catholic ethicist John T. Pawlikowski, Christian Zionists not only "take a totally uncritical moral posture on the Palestinian-Israeli situation, [but] believe that the Israelis, as representatives of the forces of good fighting ultimately against the Devil, can do no wrong."[5] Pawlikowski, who is a member of the both the Roman Catholic and National Council of Churches committees on Jewish-Christian relations, adds that "They conceive of the state of Israel in such an exclusively theological fashion that the Palestinians are reduced to mere pawns in the apocalyptic drama."[6] By chronicling the pastoral endeavors of Palestinian Christians, Smith's presentation challenges the indifference of many American Christians to their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Smith's positive portrayal of Palestinian Christians who seek liberation from oppression enters into what can be treacherous rhetorical territory. To question Israeli actions and policy regarding Palestinians is often a taboo. Neoconservative theorist Norman Podhoretz labels all interpretations of the "war on terror" which question Israeli treatment of the Palestinians as "anti-Semitic canards."[7] In a speech marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon similarly assailed as "anti-Semites" those who criticize, what he calls, "The legitimate self-defense measures which Israel takes in its war against Palestinian terror."[8]

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3 John T. Pawlikowski, "Ethical Issues in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," in Rosemary Radford Ruether and Marc H., eds. *Beyond Occupation: American Jewish, Christian, and Palestinian Voice for Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), 160.

4 In 1944, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church condemned dispensationalism as being "out of accord" with the Church's confessions of faith. See, "Eschatology: Section Appendix—Report on Dispensationalism (1944 GA)" http://www.pcusa.org/today/archive/believe/wpb9901h.htm (Accessed: April 4, 2005).

5 Pawlikowski, "Ethical Issues in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," 160.

6 Ibid.

7 Norman Podhoretz, "World War IV: How It Started, What It Means, and Why We Have to Win." *Commentary,* September 2004, 32-33.

8 Ariel Sharon, "Remarks by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to the Israeli Knesset, Marking the Struggle Against Anti-Semitism" (Prime Minister's Bureau, Jerusalem) Federal News Service, 26 January 2005.

Smith rises above ancient power struggles when he quotes Mitri Raheb, an ecumenical delegate to the 2004 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Raheb states: "Christian hope does not surrender to the forces of death and despair but challenges them." Sparking condemnation, the Presbyterian denominational gathering that Raheb attended decided to initiate a process of selective disinvestment from corporations operating in Israel and the occupied territories as a non-violent economic strategy of resistance to pressure Israel to uphold Palestinian dignity.[9] Harvard law professor Alan M. Dershowitz responded to the divestment resolution by stating that "The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has committed a grievous sin."[10] Conservative pundit Dennis Prager accused the PCUSA of "committing evil."[11] Prager charged: "In the name of Jesus, it has called for the economic strangulation of Israel."[12]

Lost in the fray over the disinvestment policy, which also attracted the attention of the *New York Times*,[13] a second and perhaps more significant and worthwhile Presbyterian General Assembly resolution condemned Christian Zionism on the grounds that it erroneously links biblical faithfulness to absolute support of the modern state of Israel as part of a "prophetic end-time countdown."[14] The resolution also warned that "Since the crisis of 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it has been easy to persuade the public that history is unraveling precisely as Dispensationalism predicted."[15]

The Presbyterian condemnation of Christian Zionism serves the vital purpose of disconnecting general humanitarian support for both Pales-

9 216th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) "General Assembly Action: Resolution on Israel and Palestine" http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/israelpalestine/israelpalestineresolution.htm (Accessed: April 4, 2005).

10 Alan M. Dershowitz, "Presbyterians' Shameful Boycott," *Los Angeles Times*, 4 August 2004.

11 Dennis Prager, "Presbyterian Church Defames Christianity," *Creators' Syndicate*, 20 July 2004.

12 Ibid.

13 Neela Banerjee. "Presbyterians and Jews to Meet on Mideast," *New York Times*, 28 September 2004, 14; Neela Banerjee. "Jews Trying to Avert Protestant Divestment," *New York Times*, 29 September 2004, 19.

14 216th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "General Assembly Action: Resolution on Confronting Christian Zionism" http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/israelpalestine/christianzionism.htm (Accessed: April 4, 2005).

15 Ibid.

tinians and Israelis from one-sided and erroneous Biblical presumptions in favor of Israel. Christian ethicist Ronald Stone has written that both Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich were Zionists in the sense that as Christian thinkers they supported the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 as a refuge for Jewish Holocaust survivors and as a state committed to Western-style democracy. However, Stone writes, neither Niebuhr nor Tillich viewed the founding of Israel as a fulfillment of any biblical promise.[16]

Cornel West has validly criticized Niebuhr for his indifferent defense of "the subordination" of Palestinians upon Israel's founding.[17] But it is significant that by freeing his Zionist sentiments from alleged biblical prophecy, Niebuhr was able to write in one of his last published references to Israel in 1958 that "pro-Zionist" Christians like himself are "as embarrassed as anti-Zionist religious Jews when Messianic claims are used to substantiate the right of the Jews to the particular homeland in Palestine; or when it is assumed that this can be done without injury to the Arabs."[18]

Modern Christian Zionists such as *Left Behind* series author Timothy LaHaye, Jerry Falwell, D. James Kennedy, and Hal Lindsey, among others, promulgate widely held ideas about Armageddon and the wafting of "true" Christian believers into heaven during the so-called "Rapture."[19] As English journalist George Manbiot has documented, these dispensationalist interpretations of various biblical passages are driving aspects of American Middle East policy.[20] Such Christian Zionists lack Niebuhr's modicum

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16 Ronald H. Stone, *Professor Reinhold Niebuhr: A Mentor to the Twentieth Century* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 262; Mary Ann Stenger and Ronald H. Stone. *Dialogues of Paul Tillich* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2002), 61.

17 Cornel West. *Prophetic Fragments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 151.

18 Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Relations of Christians and Jews in Western Civilization," in Reinhold Niebuhr, *Pious and Secular America* (New York: Scribner's, 1958), 109.

19 See, Barbara R. Rossing. *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2004).

20 George Monbiot, "Their beliefs are bonkers, but they are at the heart of power: U.S. Christian fundamentalists are driving Bush's Middle East policy," *The Guardian*, 20 April 2004. See also, Bill Broadway. "The Evangelical-Israeli Connection: Scripture Inspires Many Christians to Support Zionism Politically, Financially," *Washington Post*, 27 March 2004, B9; "Meet the New Zionists," *The Guardian*, 28 October 2002, 2; Michael Freund, "U.S. Christians Lobby against Gaza Retreat," *Jerusalem Post*, 9 April 2004, 2; Martin E. Marty, "Bound by Belief," *New York Times*, 15 April 2000, A23; Alison Mitchell, "Mideast Turmoil: The Conservatives, Israel Winning Broad Support from U.S. Right," *New York Times,* 21 April 2002, 1; Peter Beinart, "Does the Christian Right Understand Zionism?" *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette,* 19 May 2002, E4; Jonathan Rosenblum, "American Christians Care More than

of Christian realism regarding Israel and Palestine and are indifferent to any "injury to the Arabs."

Historian Ernest Sandeen has observed that although late nineteenth-century Princeton Theological Seminary scholars such as Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield strongly disagreed with dispensationalism because they saw it as being biblically unsupported, their mutual opposition to "the common Modernist foe" kept the Old Princeton theologians "at peace" with the dispensationalists.[21] History might have unfolded differently had the Old Princeton theologians instead joined the "Modernists" against dispensationalists such as English preacher John Nelson Darby who invented the term rapture, former Confederate army soldier and *Scofield Reference Bible* editor Cyrus L. Scofield, and evangelists Dwight L. Moody and William Eugene Blackstone.[22] Like the early twenty-first century webmasters at "www.raptureready.com" who update each day's "rapture index,"[23] Blackstone, the author of the influential 1878 bestseller, *Jesus is Coming*, argued that Zionist immigration to Palestine demonstrated that Israel is "God's sundial," revealing the imminence of Christ's return.[24]

In June 1971, 1,200 evangelical Protestants from 32 countries gathered in Jerusalem. In the aftermath of the 1967 Israeli capture of Jerusalem, which evangelicals saw as "confirmation that Jews and Israel still had a role to play in God's ordering of history,"[25] the Jerusalem Conference on

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U.S. Jews," *Jerusalem Post,* 16 November 2001, 9B; Tom Jenney, "Easter in Palestine: Letter From Gaza and the West Bank," *Chronicles*, October 1999, 38-40.

21 Ernest R. Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of The Origins of Fundamentalism," in Martin E. Marty, ed. *Modern American Protestantism and Its World*, vol. 10 "Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism" (Munich and New York: K.G. Saur, 1993), 27.

22 Yaakov Ariel. *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes Toward Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865-1945* (Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing, 1991), 12; Donald Wagner, "Evangelicals and Israel: Theological Roots of a Political Alliance," *The Christian* Century, 4 November 1998, 1021; Timothy P. Weber, "How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend," *Christianity Today*, 5 October 1998, 45.

23 http://www.raptureready.com/rap2.html (Accessed: April 4, 2005) (On this date the rapture index was listed as 154); See also, Bill Moyers, "There is No Tomorrow," *Star Tribune*, 30 January 2005; Todd Strandberg, "The Iraq War Has Little Effect on the Rapture Index," *Christianity Today*, 24 March 2003. See also, Bill Moyers, "Welcome to Doomsday," *New York Review of Books*, vol. 52, no. 5, March 24, 2005.

24 Paul C. Merkley. *The Politics of Christian Zionism 1891-1948* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 64.

25 Gerald McDermott, "Evangelicals and Israel: A Conversation with Gerald R. McDermott," *Center Conversations*, no. 25, November 2005 (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public

Biblical Prophecy was billed as the "first conference of its kind since A.D. 59"—the first assembly of Christ's Apostles.

After being welcomed by Israel founder and former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, conference co-chairman and theologian Carl F.H. Henry, the "Dean"[26] of American evangelical Christian theologians, celebrated "the regathering of Israel from the ends of the earth" as a fulfillment of prophecy.[27] To his credit, Westminster Theological Seminary President Edmund P. Clowney challenged prominent evangelicals such as W.A. Criswell, Harold J. Ockenga, John F. Walvoord and other dispensationalists at the conference who argued that the temple of Jerusalem would have to be rebuilt as a precondition for the return of Jesus Christ, by insisting that no temple needed to be rebuilt because "Christ is the temple."[28] Clowney's doubts about the entire venture were noted in a *Newsweek* magazine article about the conference.[29]

By describing the strength of Christian communities among Palestinians, Smith has powerfully appealed to the consciences of all people of goodwill. My one quibble with his article is his blanket description of turn of the twentieth-century Islamic thinkers Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Egyptian Jurist Muhammad 'Abduh as Islamic nationalists, when Afghani and especially 'Abduh advocated somewhat modern forms of political and economic liberalism. As Islam experts Karen Armstrong, Antony Black, Paul L. Heck, and Carolyn Fleur-Loban have described, 'Abduh's thought provides valuable and inspiring resources for contemporary inter-faith and international political discussions.[30] Reinhard Schulze, moreover, has

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Policy Center, 2003), 5.

26 Michael Foust, "Carl F.H. Henry, 'Dean' of Evangelical Theologians, Dies at 90," *Baptist Press News*, 9 December 2003. http://www.sbcbaptistpress.org/bpnews.asp?Id=17234 (Accessed: April 5, 2005).

27 Carl F.H. Henry, "Jesus Christ and the Last Days," in Carl F.H. Henry, ed. *The Prophecy in the Making* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Creation House, 1971), 181. Carl F. H. Henry, *Conversations with Carl Henry: Christianity for Today* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 117, 188; Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority,* vol. VI "God Who Stands and Stays," (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983), 489.

28 Edmund P. Clowney, "The Final Temple," in Carl F.H. Henry, ed. *The Prophecy in the Making* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Creation House, 1971), 28.

29 "Prophets in Jerusalem," *Newsweek*, 28 June 1971, 62.

30 Karen Armstrong. "Was It Inevitable?" in James E. Hoge, Jr. and Gideon Rose, eds. *How Did This Happen: Terrorism and the New War* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 68-69; Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present*

documented how 'Abduh "inveighed against the political programs of Islamic nationalists in Egypt."[31]

President George W. Bush said in his recent State of the Union Address that "The goal of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace is within reach, and America will help them achieve that goal."[32] Hopefully Robert O. Smith's important study will promote the goal of greater Middle East and world peace. Smith has provided a valuable resource for Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious leaders who seek reconciliation. Whenever people talk to one another and take active steps toward justice, humanity moves closer toward the greater realization of peace.

(New York: Routledge, 2001), 304-305; Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, *Islamic Societies in Practice* 2nd ed. (Gainesville, Florida: Univ. Press of Florida, 2004), 228 ("The liberal tradition is one whose current ideas can be traced to the writings of the great Egyptian jurist Muhammad Abduh[.]"); Paul L. Heck, "Religious Renewal in Syria: the Case of Muhammad al-Habash," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* Vol. 15, No. 2 (April 2004): 185-207. See also, Muhammad 'Abduh "Laws Should Change in Accordance with the Conditions of Nations *and* The Theology of Unity," in Charles Kurzman, ed. *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 50.

31 Reinhold Schulze. *A Modern History of the Islamic World* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 30.

32 George W. Bush, "State of the Union, 2 February 2005" http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/02/20050202-11.html (Accessed: June 4, 2006).

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The Chosen Issue? Home Demolitions and the House of Israel

ELLIOT A. RATZMAN

It has been said that the Palestinians are the Jews of the Arab world. Exilic, educated, cosmopolitan, agitating. If so, Palestinian Christians are the Jews of the Jews of the Arab world. Internal exiles within a larger Arab "Islamacite," they are, as Robert Smith notes, vexed by intermittently dangerous Palestinian-Muslim nationalism and structurally pernicious Jewish-Israeli nationalism. Rendered invisible to most American Christians, who can only see a hostile and violent *Muslim* face of Palestinian nationalism, Robert Smith has done a service by bringing to our attention a more complex portrait of a peace (and justice) seeking community.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become an issue that, in part, reflects the twisted and divided sides of the American cultural wars. Evangelical Christians, many of whom have *not* made a separate peace with the Jewish people, continue to see Jews as candidates for conversion or as hard-hearted means to end-time scenarios. This is in contrast with the Catholic Church and the mainline denominations where Jewish-Christian relations have undergone a world-historic change for the better since the Second World War, Vatican II, and the philosemitic papacy of Karol Wojtyla. Note this: nothing remains more bitter to Jews, even secular Jews, than the chutzpah of Christian missions to convert us. Yet, in recent years, many Jews have joined with apocalypse-minded evangelicals, many who oppose the liberal social agenda of American Jews, in order to insure that Israel enjoys American political and economic support.

American Jews have always found allies for social liberalism among the mainline and black churches as well as partners for progressive economic and immigration policies among Catholics. Recently, however, the Jew-

ish press has been filled with hand-wringing and woe-moaning over the recent spat of steps – mincing steps by fair-minded accounts – of some political actions by mainline denominations aimed at the most pernicious aspects of the occupation: namely, the demolition of Palestinian homes and the construction of a separation barrier. These are demolitions not of the houses of suicide bombers' families or weapon smugglers, but houses which may have the misfortune of existing too close to West Bank settlement or an Israeli-only access road. The separation barrier is not the border demanded by the left, running along the 1967 border of Israel proper, but rather a political structure which usurps wide swaths of fertile Palestinian land, far beyond the Green Line. Both policies have resulted in what might be called the "slow motion" ethnic cleansing of Palestinians living outside of the major West Bank cities.[1]

Yet I must dissent in part from the critical-of-Israel chorus for a moment by asking tough clusters of questions: why is it that Israel-Palestine has become the Chosen Issue? Of all the conflicts in the world, why are we consumed with this one? Compared to the many conflicts around the world, are the injustices perpetuated of the highest magnitude? No. Is the body count higher? No. Is the vastness of the territory in dispute greater? No. Is the number of people at risk of starvation, absolute poverty, and disease greater? No. Yet Israel-Palestine has enjoyed the most coverage and concern of any global conflict for at least the last 20 years. By comparison, Haiti, a country within our hemisphere, whose poverty, political repression, and disease are astonishingly pernicious and perennial has not commanded anything close to the attention as has Palestine.[2] Much of the problems of Haiti can be laid almost directly at the feet of the United States. Yet the problems of Haiti, right in our backyard, have failed to capture the imagination of the American Liberal-Left.

There are three major reasons why we lavish disproportionate attention to Israel and Palestine. First, Israel receives an absurd amount of for-

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1 See, for example, "Jewish Groups Criticize Presbyterian Vote To Divest From Israel," *Washington Report on Middle Eastern Affairs*, January/February 2005: 54-55, and "Rights Group Target Bulldozer Company," *The Forward,* December 3, 2004.

2 See the recent works of Dr. Paul Farmer, whose work in Haiti is magnificently documented in Tracy Kidder's hagiography of Farmer, *Mountains Beyond Moutntains,* New York: Random House, 2003. See also, Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2003).

eign aid, political protection, and preferential treatment from the United States. Israel is thus perceived as a symbol of American influence in the Middle-East. Second, Israel's democratic public sphere (or perhaps its terribly incompetent governmental sphere) allows for extensive documentation and reportage. Abuse, outrage, and injustice are all readily -- and relatively safely -- documented and documentable by a variety of agencies, NGOs, media outlets, and so forth in Israel proper. Third, and most important, we are talking about the Holy Land for the major Western religions.[3] It has captured the imagination of the West because it is the diorama of the West's religious imagination.

Nevertheless, the problems of Israelis and Palestinians are real and tragic and should be addressed. What I would like to call attention to are issues that revolve around major distinctions between Judaism and Christianity. And so my second concern: why is it that we frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an issue with Zionism, essentially disputing the claim that Jews are a nation? Conversely, how far are Christians willing to go to acknowledge nationalism, Palestinian nationalism, as a project in tension with Christian ethics? That is, the Palestinian national project, its means, its rhetoric, its self-image, and its goals have been taken for granted; Palestinians have been taken uncritically at their word by many Western Christians. Are we to collapse and conflate the Palestinian agenda with what justice demands? Isn't this forgetting that Palestinians are susceptible to the sins of nationalism as well?

Finally, Palestinian Christians must endure a tremendous difficulty: the Hebrew Bible. There is no getting around the Exodus story, even its Canaanite reading. In a Palestinian theology of liberation, Exodus does not serve as the inspirational model for freedom. Thus, as Palestinian theologian Naim Ateek notes: "The God of the Bible, hitherto the God who saves and liberates, has come to be viewed by Palestinians as partial and discriminating." (Ateek, 77)

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3 Richard L. Rubenstein argues that coverage in Israel is slight in the Asian media because of the relative absence of the Abrahamic faiths. See Rubenstein "Religion and the Uniqueness of the Holocaust," in John K. Roth and Elizabeth Maxwell, eds., *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in An Age of Genocide*, vol. 2 (Houndsmill, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 11-18.

I will address each of these problems in reverse order. Ateek in his *Justice, and Only Justice* proposes a slap-dash hermeneutic that depends on questioning the authenticity of passages describing Israelite violence. This is done by reading the Bible with a discriminating reason that has been "enlightened by the revelation of God in Christ" (81). Reading what we don't like out of our tradition, seeing it as false, because one's tradition must be purely good, is a trend that I will touch on below. Ateek avoids the obvious solution, a sort of Marcionism which would see the Hebrew Bible as the awkward work of a different, angry god. Instead, Ateek downplays the Exodus, only the founding story of the Israelites as a people, and highlights some of the horribles of Israelite kings as Biblical cautionary tales about the abuse of state power. It's a clever reading, but Christian accounts can't do justice to the Jewish religion—especially Rabbinic Judaism—and *not* acknowledge the deep connection between Jews and the Holy Land, or the centrality of the Exodus for Jews and Western Christians.

Second, we have the problem of Jews as a Nation, and Christians who are "against the nations." Tensions between Christianity and ethnic nationalism tend historically to be trumped by the successful merger of ethnic chauvinism and Christian claims. Serbian political theology is one such example. When Christians are in power, it is easy to merge religion and politics. A truthful Christianity, it would seem, would rightly find an incongruity between nationalism and parts of the Christian textual tradition. This tension is by no means absent among Christian Palestinians, a group *not* in power.

Palestinian Christians such as Ateek want to claim that Palestinians are a nation, and thus justice-claims are to be considered national issues. Ateek and others, notably theologian Rosemary Radford Reuther and nonviolent activist Mubarak Awad, want to affirm the national rights of Palestinians, while denying many if not all of the national claims of Jews. Jews, we are told, are members of a religion, not a nation. The imagined community of the Jewish people is just "imagining" that it had any claim to be present in the land of Palestine, has any claims to national rights, has any claims to be "the neighbor." At the same time, the imagined community of the Palestinians is taken for granted. Palestinian national claims, history, and aspirations are accepted at face value. The Palestinian narrative of

historical innocence is accepted, as if the Palestinian community did no wrong to the Jews who lived there before Zionism and welcomed immigrant European Jews as new neighbors or lost cousins. Whereas Palestinian Muslims might be excepted to be concerned with sovereignty issues, ought Palestinian *Christians* to be so hung up on the claims of land and peoplehood? Aren't there are more important things that the Christian is to be concerned about—isn't that right? This may account for the disproportionate number of Christian Palestinians who have left the region.

In any case, some Western Christian theologians were for many years willing to downplay the problems of Palestinian political culture: its machismo cult of martyrdom, its blood and soil rhetoric, Arafat's authoritarian leadership, and so forth. This is not to discount the faults of Israeli policy and culture—Israel's aggressive and belligerent sins are numerous, and for me, heartbreaking. One neglected ethical question must be raised: what price national freedom? Is death and murder worth the goals of the imagined community? At least one British philosopher, Ted Honderich argues so.[4] The outspoken Greek Orthodox priest and activist Attallah Hana is by no means the only Palestinian Christian to endorse suicide bombings and other violent means of resistance.[5] How far then does the "preferential option for the poor" go? Are the claims of the poor automatically true? Are all movements established on behalf of the poor legitimate? When the victims are violently wrong or untruthful, we, the left, tend to silence our critical voices, fearful we may be blaming the victim.

Historically, the emergence of decisively pro-Palestinian (not anti-Israel) voices among Christian theologians coincided with a new framing of the conflict. If in 1967 the story was about the paper behemoth of the Pan-Arab world against tiny, spunky, social democratic Israel, after the June War and the emergence of the PLO the conflict became progressively more and more about the *Palestinian*-Israeli conflict, and less about the *Arab*-Israeli conflict. Sympathy was late-coming due to the real follies and foibles and unforgivable violence of the early Fatah and the Marxist factions of the PLO. Palestinian nationalists became the symbol of the opposite

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4 See Ted Honderich, *Terrorism For Humanity* (Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2003).

5 "Weblog: Greeks Gag Pro-Terrorism Priest," *Christianity Today*, July 15. http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2002/127/12.0.html

of non-violence: hijackers of innocents, assassins of moderates, all in the name of an allegedly *greater* violence perpetuated against the Palestinian people. Despite this, the post-1967 occupation's pernicious colonization of the West Bank and Israel's war into Lebanon enabled many to see Israeli actions as inappropriate aggression.

The first major attempt to address the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in theological language of which I am aware is in Nicholas Woltersdorff's *Until Justice and Peace Embrace*. These 1981 Kuyper Lectures address the role of Christianity in a global context, employing World-Systems Theory to illuminate the role of Christianity in its global form. In the chapter on nationalism, "Nation against Nation," the Palestinian-Israeli crisis, complete with an explication and critique of Zionist theory and politics, occupies something like a dozen pages, with no mention of Christian Palestinians. His analysis and critique of Israel and his account of Zionism's flaws is serviceable given the brevity a dozen pages demands. However, my concern is not with the substance of his critique but the choice of it. Woltersdorff, a Presbyterian with many ties to the South African Churches, with an admirable record of activism and writing against white supremacy, spends only a few pages on Apartheid, a system devised by Dutch Christian colonialists, imposed on a majority Christian population, who, in 1981, certainly needed stronger, more active anti-Apartheid voices from the European and American Churches. Nevertheless, Jewish nationalism was roundly critiqued for its injustices.

Rosemary Radford Reuther, a Catholic theologian, yet very influential among Protestants, was one of the first to call attention to the scriptural roots of Christian anti-Semitism in her widely read *Faith and Fratricide*. Her 1989 work *The Wrath of Jonah*, has become the most comprehensive work on the Palestinian conflict by a Christian theologian. It is a strong book, explicating the history of the conflict, post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian thought, the history of the Palestinian cause, and so forth. Yet the conflict is framed as almost exclusively a problem of Jewish nationalism and Western imperialism. The contributions of Arab and Palestinian nationalism to the "sinful situation" of the Middle East is largely absent in their analysis. Zionism and Israel *qua* Jewish state are treated as "false messianism," (236) a "moral debacle" (221). Israel is the "tail that wags

the dog of American Imperialism" (238) and so forth.[6] Judaism, the *real* Judaism, is not tribal, but universal monotheism. The *true* Judaism, she more then implies, is a powerless, peaceful, and stateless Judaism, not the embodied Judaism, the non-liberal Judaism, of, say, theologians Michael Wyschogrod and Emil Fackenheim.

These are quick examples, but we find repeatedly among American Christians and Palestinian Christians that all the problems are laid at the feet of Zionism. Zionism is not a monolithic ideology, but a cluster of ideas, projects, and movements that have revolved around the importance of the Land of Israel for the Jewish people, understanding the Jewish people as a nation. Political Zionism is statist; spiritual Zionism isn't. Revisionist Zionism is hostile to Arab nationalism and capitalist; Labor Zionism sought to create a socialist society in Palestine. Though some of the different strains and streams of Zionism are noted by Wolterstorff, Reuther, and Ateek, inevitably the language slips back to "the problem as Zionism." This simply apes the Third Worldist anti-Zionist rhetoric of the Palestinian movement. As a Zionist, I find this part of the rhetoric most stinging. This anti-Zionist line is usually coupled with the by now cliché question "how can a people so persecuted themselves turn and persecute Palestinians?"

So this is what I reply: Zionism is a variegated tradition. I will not abandon that tradition simply because of Ariel Sharon and the Settlers. As a socialist, I will not abandon Socialism because of Stalinism. I will not ask Christians to give up Christianity because of its more than spotty record of religious violence. Of course not. You don't expect me to become Christian; I don't expect Palestinians to become Zionists. Too much bad blood. We instead hold out for the truer Christianity, the noble dreams of Socialism, and the ascendancy of an egalitarian Zionism. We cannot be triumphalist about any of these creeds, these traditions. They all have blood on their hands.

So while Christians make moral demands of the State of Israel, while Christians protest Israeli policies and the ethnic violence of the settler movement, let it be done without glee, without self-righteousness, and with

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6 Rosemary Radford Reuther and Herman J. Reuther. *The Wrath of Jonah: The Crisis of Religious Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002).

the sad sense that Christians and Palestinians, too, have sinned. Christians risk the hypocrisy that comes with being associated with a tradition with a mixed record. Christians quickly went from being the persecuted under Rome, to being the persecutors of non-Christians. This brings me to the issue of Constantinian Christianity.

Stanley Hauerwas and others rightly note that the Church is to distance itself from the violence of the State. Entanglement with violence, with the powers-that-be, is to be avoided. Hauerwas' constant refrain is to separate Christianity from American nationalism.[7] However, when it comes to Palestinian nationalism, what is the anti-Constantinian Christian to do? What relationship ought Christians to have with non-state actors aspiring to become state actors? I think it may be to separate the authentic claims of justice from the tribalist claims of power, nationalist mythology, and ethnic chauvinism. This should be as true for the Palestinian national movement as for the Jewish one. An important move in contemporary theology claims Christianity is a force *other than* the state, *other than* the way things are in the world. Christian Palestinians may indeed be in some ways that unstable force in a stable, but unjust order; the "other" to the Islamic hegemony of the Middle East in general, and to Jewish hegemony in Palestine.

These are crucial complaints, but minor issues in the face of the real problems of real Palestinians. And so my ideological disputes, though I want them taken seriously, must be debated, let us say, while we march for justice and peace. After all, theology and theory are by no means adequate substitutes for smart organizing and engaged activism. As for how Christians are to march, what the messages should be on their placards, I have some concluding thoughts.

I know of no braver and more admirable form of Christian practice than the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT).[8] This is a Mennonite group,

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7 Jeff Stout has recently taken Hauerwas to task about the imperative for Christians to take responsibility for the political arrangements in which they find themselves. Certainly this is true, and I would also amplify what is implicit in Stout by saying that Christian citizens need to take responsibility for the impact that those political arrangements have on others around the world. US foreign policy starts at home. See Chapter Six, "Virtue and the Way of the World," in *Democracy and Tradition (*Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

8 They describe themselves on their website: "Christian Peacemaker Teams is a program of Brethren, Quaker and Mennonite Churches (USA and Canada). The Baptist Peace Fellow-

instigated years ago by a challenge by Ron Sider. They ask: "What would happen if Christians devoted the same discipline and self-sacrifice to nonviolent peacemaking that armies devote to war?" CPT acts as Christian activist-ambassadors, not missionaries, who have stood in solidarity with at-risk communities in Columbia, Iraq, Hebron, and even Haiti. These are Christians that walk their talk—their wonderful slogan is "getting in the way"—and have been nothing but a force for good in Hebron. My friend Art Gish, a Mennonite organic farmer from impoverished Southeastern Ohio, has published a record of his activism in Palestine, *Hebron Journal: Stories of Nonviolent Peacemaking*. In it, we find an outsider in overalls doing his best to be faithful both to justice, standing in solidarity with Palestinians, but also trying to truly understand the fear and hatred of the Jewish settlers.

Now, not all can be like Art Gish. He's a fearless, faithful, and sometimes crazy, exemplar. But there is no doubt that churches can become tied into CPT's mission: fundraising, letter-writing, lobbying, etc. Even saintly activists need their worldly supporters. There is much work to be done and simply "knowing" about the plight of Palestinians isn't good enough.

Besides the CPT, there are groups like the International Solidarity Movement, the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Rabbis for Human Rights and others that are worthy of support. Christians can certainly get on their email list to find out about their needs, and the role they are asking you to play in resolving the conflict. Additionally, the reason that radical Islamic groups are so popular in Palestine (and I'd argue elsewhere) is that they have filled the social welfare gap left by the secular state. I said that Christian Palestinians are the Jews of the Palestinians, and here's another reason. As religious minorities, they have an interest in a secular state, rather than an Islamic-inflected government. Christians must do more to ensure that the secular state is also a functional welfare state.

So here are my suggestions for Christian organizers, that is, Christian clergy and active laypeople. In general, seminarians should be thinking

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ship, Every Church a Peace Church, On Earth Peace and The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship are also sponsors of CPT. Christians from other bodies in the ecumenical Christian community are participants in the 40 member full-time Christian Peacemaker Corps and the part-time 125 member Reserve Corps." http://www.cpt.org/

about how best to leverage the resources of their congregations. Christians should be thinking more concretely about how they are doing peace and justice work. Though I think that other world events ought to command our attention—the "chronic tsunamis" of hunger, disease, political violence—if Israel/Palestine is where one's concerns are, then let it be. Just let it be smartly organized!

First, forget awareness, focus on campaigns. Just knowing about a conflict, and there is a lot to know, too much to know, never accomplishes anything without organizing. Boycotts of bulldozers that sell to Israel are admirable not for any economic hardship it may cause the Caterpillar Company, but as a symbolic gesture to the Jewish community that Israeli policy in the West Bank—not Zionism, not Israel, but Land of *Yisrael* Maximalists—is unacceptable. The Settler Movement, indeed, must be fought tooth and nail. Focused campaigns and projects, especially done with activists within Palestine, will yield the most fruit. Never assume, however, that simply change of consciousness will alter the situation for the better.

Second, the left often falls into the trap of prophetic grandstanding. Someone must deliver the Jeremiad, but more people need to be doing the smart organizing that actually makes a difference. Moral exhortation to Jews in general tends not to work. Better to organize with sympathetic Jews already critical of Israel. Perhaps educating evangelical pro-Israel congregations is the task for Christians concerned about Christian Palestinians. As Robert Smith notes, Western Christian rightists who support Israel are predictably callous toward their Palestinian co-religionists. As Mitri Raheb notes "Many of them do not even talk or communicate with us Palestinian Christians. They think that we aren't 'kosher' enough for them. As Palestinians, we have to carry on our shoulders the burdens of the so-called Christian Right" (Raheb, 90).

Third, be suspicious of Palestinian national claims as you would be of any nationalist claims. Palestinians are sinners, too, and it is hard to separate what is an issue of *ressentiment,* power, and desire and what are issues of suffering, justice, and proper objects of desire. Palestinians claim that Jerusalem is their eternal capital. Is this an issue of justice? Are capitals and flags as important as the safety, health and well-being of Palestinian persons? Standing with the poor shouldn't mean we turn off our critical

faculties. We all have a lot to learn from each other, including the Palestinians. But to treat them as anything less than fully human, and thus sinful, is to make them and their cause an idol.

Working on Israel-Palestine issues always fills me with sadness. The conflict is filled with tough calls, broken people, and persistent moral ambiguity. I am holding out for a just Zionism and a democratic socialist Israel that truly becomes a "State of all its citizens." But, though imagined, it is still my homeland, my spiritual home. Until justice and peace embrace, then, let us struggle and expect proximate justice and a difficult peace. We cannot expect the New Jerusalem tomorrow because of our efforts, but it will come.

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Response to the Respondents

ROBERT O. SMITH

It now falls to me to provide some responsible comments on the diverse and exceedingly thoughtful responses offered by my colleagues. If communication is the art of making common, I am confident that, even in our disagreements, we have given faithfully of ourselves around what I find to be an engaging subject: the efforts of Palestinian Christians to form Palestinian identity and nationalism against insuperable odds.

In her desire for more "micro-politics" (32), more specificity, more *scaffolding* on which to hang the present reality of Palestinian Christianity, Michelle Cohen succeeds in demonstrating her discipline's demand of complicating rather than simplifying the vagaries of human experience and human community. I accept her critique in the spirit it is offered, as "an act of love" (39). To recognize the beneficial nature of agonistic engagement, however, does not entirely alleviate its sometimes agonizing quality. The benefits of interdisciplinary engagement are apparent when, in good faith, we each bring to the table the most incisive critique available from each unique perspective. As the Qur'an bears witness in a fundamental affirmation of pluralism, "Had Allah willed He could have made you one community," but so that God may test us in what we have been given, we are commanded to "vie one with another in good works" (*Surah al-Ma'idah*, "The Table" [5]:48).

Regarding theories of nationalism, Cohen cautions us that "alliances between people and communities," that is, alliances of nationality, "are always *made* and cannot be assumed" (35). To this end, she aptly suggests modification of Benedict Anderson's category so that one speaks in terms of "imagin*ing* communities" rather than accepting the static reality of "imagined communities" (34), a *koinonia semper reformanda* if you will. In this light, the relationships described in my paper between Palestinian Christians and Muslims seem to Cohen to be too easily claimed, though

not only because she feels I leave "the concept somewhat under-theorized" (33). In some ways, she is right. Since these matters are of interest to other respondents and although I cannot address all of the anthropologically salient questions, I will briefly provide some historical background with an eye toward addressing some of Cohen's complicating questions.

While I am confident that I have not overly distorted the contemporary situation, there exists a complex of suspicion brought forth from the past. Living under the Ottoman Empire, Christians had little opportunity to compete for status with their Muslim counterparts. Living within a "*dhimmī* status" which "required that the churches become private to themselves," Christians benefited socially from Ottoman economic alliances (capitulations) with European powers (Cragg 1992, 71). As a result, "Muslims and Christians developed a different set of primary political loyalties and different kinds of political organizations to express those loyalties" (Divine 1980, 219). The Christian condition improved further during the British mandatory period (1918–1947). Because, for the most part, they had been educated in the European missionary schools, Palestinian Christians more readily met the entrance requirements for service in the British regime, elevating Muslim suspicions that the British favored the Christian community.

Historian Rashid Khalidi complicates the narrative that Palestinian Christians were seen only as collaborators with imperial power. Although they benefited from contacts with Europeans, he notes, "in the nineteenth century, many Palestinian and other Arab Christians came to share this fear of European imperialism" (Khalidi, 153). Khalidi's singular contribution to the discussion of Palestinian nationalism is his conclusion that while "local consciousness of Palestine as a discrete entity" was "enhanced by ... the fact that foreigners recognized it as such" (Khalidi, 152), "the *idea* of Palestine as a source of identity and as a community with shared interests had already taken root ... before World War I." As time went on, loyalty to Palestine, far from being a divisive force between Muslims and Christians, "competed with and complemented loyalty to the Ottoman state and to the Muslim and Christian religious communities ... and other more local loyalties" (Khalidi, 156). To this end, Khalidi discusses an article from March 1920 which announced "the newfound unity between

Christians and Muslims in Gaza 'after all old sensitivities and frictions had been removed from spirits and hearts,'" a unity demonstrated by the establishment of a local Muslim-Christian Society that sought to resist both Zionism and, in Khalidi's words, "attempts by the British and the Zionists to divide the Arabs on religious lines." The purpose of the Society was to positively effect "Palestinian nationalism/patriotism in particular, and Arab nationalism/patriotism in general" (Khalidi, 169). It is in precisely this distinction between Palestinian and Arab patriotism that the alliance between Christians and Muslims in Palestine became more solid.

Although it is still operating in the world of diachronic rather than synchronic description—and thus does not adequately address Cohen's anthropologically salient questions—I hope this brief historical overview serves to clarify the background of the present situation and shed some light on how it is that the relationship between Muslim and Christian Palestinians can be described as 'brotherly' and 'symbiotic.' What I appreciate about Cohen's disciplinary approach is its willingness to let the context speak for itself, to tell its own story, as it were. It asks what is and reserves pronouncements on what ought to be.

Each of us, I am sure, harbors some ideal for how Palestinian Christians ought to comprehend and conduct themselves in their space. Before I turn to Khurram Hussain and his beautiful presentation of an analogy between the Palestinian Christian situation and that of the Parsis in the Indian subcontinent, however, I feel that our potential desires to provide normative judgments regarding Palestinian Christians can be helpfully confronted by a scholar of Parsi descent. Homi Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture*, argues for the positive valuation of "a place of hybridity ... where the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other, properly alienates our political expectations." We are urged, therefore, to view subjects such as Palestinian Christians "without rushing to produce a unity of the social antagonism or contradiction" (Bhabha 1994, 25). For the outside observer, however, "the margin of hybridity ... becomes the moment of panic," for it "resists the binary opposition of racial and cultural groups" (Bhabha 1994, 207). Especially among Protestants in North America, postcolonial pronouncements like Raheb's book title—*I Am a Palestinian Christian*—can induce panic. But Palestinian Christians

will not have the hybridity of their identity torn asunder, as we might prefer it.

Thus, Bhabha's notion of hybridity complicates Hussain's understanding of Palestinian Christians' "discursive unintelligibility," a concept he introduces to comment on my recounting of Bishop Younan's eventful stroll through the Old City of Jerusalem. In relation to the ensuing events, Hussain asks a question that interests me as well: "How and why does the 'cross' become the site of such visceral abjection" (41)? One simple answer is that these visceral reactions are elicited by historical and doctrinal religious concern. For both Jews and Muslims, the symbol of the cross is potentially a heretical defilement of sacred space, and there are few spaces more sacred for each than the Western Wall and the Dome of the Rock. Muslims deny the historicity of the Christian narrative regarding Jesus' crucifixion (*Surah al-Nisā* [4]:157) and Jews have been oppressed for centuries by those who lift high the cross, often to atrocious ends. Thus, the tensions evidenced in those encounters were not *only* reactions to contemporary Palestinian political realities. Beyond these visceral rejections of Christian symbolism, however, I am intrigued by two other elements of the story. The first is that Bishop Younan was invited to stand with Muslim leaders outside al-Haram al-Sharif to receive the pope. The second was the curious rebuke spoken by Bishop Younan's Muslim escort: "Be quiet! . . . He is our bishop." What a curious statement this is to our ears, from even a close Muslim friend!

My doubts concerning the absoluteness of Palestinian Christians' "discursive unintelligibility" in their context lead me to doubt the sustainability of Hussain's proposed analogical linking of Palestinian Christians and Parsis, a community that, according to Hussain, has been "for all practical purposes invisible" and has maintained its mythic commitment by staying "aloof and politically invisible" (44). The analogy would be tantalizing but for the simple fact that Palestinian Christians are not foreigners in a foreign land!

One might answer by asserting that they have been made to be so; as Hussain rightly observes, Palestinian Christian "invisibility is hardly accidental" (43). The question that is raised, however, is why they should deign to accept this invisibility? Such a capitulation could not possibly

cauterize the demographic hemorrhage. Why should this community not resist with every ounce of its being? Far from remaining "aloof and politically invisible," these Christians understand themselves called to be salt and yeast in their world. Yeast, despite its unassuming appearance, is unrelentingly active. And salt flavors and preserves anything with which it comes into contact: "But if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot" (Matthew 5:13).

During the past two centuries, the saltiness of Palestinian Christians has been proved in their participation in Palestinian politics. In contrast to Hussain, who wonders if "modern nation-states" are "doomed to forever recapitulate into totalizing narratives of nationality in which erasure and politicide are not exceptions to the rule" (43), Irfan Khawaja holds out great hope for secular politics. The problem he identifies, however, is divining particularly Christian foundations for ELCJHL political activity.

Khawaja insightfully inquires if ELCJHL political activity is "specifically religious or Christian" (46), and if it differs substantively from a secular politics. In his conclusion, Khawaja makes clear his eschatological hope for the triumph of secularity. He wonders, in relation to Israel/Palestine, if Palestinian Christians will help usher in this secular *parousia*. Given my initial paper, it may be clear that I am sympathetic with this reading. However, it must be stated that Christian secularists have been just as violent and intractable as their religiously-identified and motivated counterparts. George Habash and Naef Hawatmeh were both Greek Orthodox Christians. Nonetheless, this identification speaks more to what journalist Charles Sennott calls their "tribal affiliation"; their Marxist economic commitments and passionate Arab nationalism were what attracted their followings. As Sennott recounts, their "violent rhetoric and deeds ... often seemed over the top ... as if these men had more to prove that other (Islamic) Arab leaders" (Sennott 2001, 150).

The leaders of the ELCJHL, while perhaps not always *publicly* meeting Khawaja's proposed threshold of making "significant reference to the *supernatural character*of Christian morality" (46), have roundly rejected earlier forms of secular politics. As I quote Mitri Raheb in the original paper, "a contextual Palestinian theology. . . important for the future of the

Holy Land ... is an alternative both to escaping into religious fundamentalism and to discarding religion for secularism" (21). These Christian leaders are not unaware of the failings inherent to the region's secular leadership. Nevertheless, when Arafat died, the websites of both Sabeel and the International Center of Bethlehem were drenched in the dark shades of mourning. However flawed, this is the secular politics in which they live and move and have their being. In defiance of John Milbank's dictum that "if theology no longer seeks to position, qualify or criticize other discourses, then it is inevitable that these discourses will position theology," these Christians, *as Christians*, seek to *re*position the discourse even as they have been *positioned* (Milbank 1993, 1).

When Khawaja does cite the guiding logic of ELCJHL political involvement—the theology of *martyria*—his reading flattens rather than expands the concept. Martyria, read "literally" (47) as if for Christians it is contained only in the cross, does not capture the *vocatio*, the calling of Acts 1:8. As with the Islamic concept of *shahāda*, *martyria* can mean death in a righteous cause, the vocal profession of faith, or any number of actions undertaken *in faith*. Louis Gardet, for instance, highlights the ethical implications of *shahāda* by describing it as "the concrete witnessing to [God's] unity-unicity, actualizing and creating in the heart of the believer the interior reality of *tawhīd*" (Gardet 1987, 6:28). Given this understanding of *martyria*, there is little reason for Khawaja to read the concept as politically defeatist, that is, only "tenuously related to the achievement of earthly goods like liberty or prosperity" (49). Understood thusly, *martyria*, with specifically Christian content, can undergird non-triumphalist political activity seeking "a workable conception of the common good." As Callie Plunket-Brewton hopes, the resulting theological ethic witnesses for the welfare of the neighbor rather than the instrumental benefit to the self.

To this point, our discussion of Palestinian Christian biblical self-understanding has been limited to the pungent imagery of *martyria* and its constitutive metaphors of salt, yeast and light. Plunket-Brewton opens the biblical narrative to a different page. Gaining perspective from the Hebrew Bible will always be an interesting exercise for Palestinians. I have a rabbi friend who told me how her heart broke when a Palestinian friend with whom she was in dialogue confided in her that the prayers and readings

shared by my friend struck terror: what for my friend was the language of the divine love was for her new friend the language of curfews and closures, the language of liberation becoming the language of oppression. Likewise, though they were chosen with due deliberation and discernment, my sons' names—Caleb and Zion—cause my Jewish friends to grin and my Palestinian friends wince.

In the battle that continues to engulf Israel/Palestine, most Americans have chosen their neighbor, the one who warrants the expenditure of their resources and the benefit of their defense. In this context especially, reading Scripture is a political act. As even Walter Brueggemann has been slow to recognize,[1] contemporary questions are raised by biblical narratives centered on conquest (and if not conquest, hegemony). These problems are apparent for Palestinians in the conquest narratives of the Torah, but I wonder if they are mitigated by citing texts that urge a kinder, gentler approach to the alien. If the texts cited by Plunket-Brewton are the foundation of an alternative ethic, Jews (and, by ahistorical extension, Israelis) are established as benefactors graciously extending their care to the aliens under their sway. Is such language at all helpful for addressing the contemporary situation? To continue to presume the primacy of one community, even at the depths of our biblical hermeneutics, is to disrupt the possibility of parity, thus precluding the vision of a viable Palestinian state existing side-by-side with the state of Israel. To *re*imagine Palestinians as neighbors rather than aliens, as persons seeking justice, opens up new vistas of Torah.

Plunket-Brewton's second concern has to do with the phenomenon of what has been called Arabization. Not only the indigenization of church leadership mentioned in my essay, the Arabization of Palestinian Christianity is the reversal of earlier trends toward *non*-Palestinian identification and support. As Ghassan Andoni has said of his own Greek Orthodox clergy: "They are okay, but they are not Palestinian. And their concerns are not our concerns. In a way, the church and its clerics in Palestine—not just the Orthodox but the Catholic and the Anglican—they are all colonizers"

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1 Compare the treatment of the contemporary state of Israel in first and second editions of Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977 / Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002).

(Sennott 2001, 154). Arabization is an important concern for Palestinian Lutherans in particular, since their tradition is a recent arrival, not only in the region but in the *world*. A matter of legitimacy within the matrix of Palestinian nationalist concern, Arabization is, in short, the loosening of commitments to western Christendom.

For Christian Zionists, Palestinian Christian efforts to shape their own destiny are nothing short of heresy. The second footnote of my original paper makes reference to the work of Paul Merkley, Canadian historian and self-identified (I am tempted to say unrepentant) Christian Zionist. In his 2001 work, *Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel*, Merkley levels what he feels to be a substantive charge against Palestinian Protestants: in Palestine, he notes, "local leaders of the Churches of the West are for the most part no longer Europeans but Arabs" who no longer see themselves "as defenders ... of what used to be called 'Christendom'" (Merkley 2001, 73). When, as I have this evening, Palestinian Christian leaders lament that their people have become alienated from the bulk of their scriptural canon, Merkley labels them heretics, accusing them of "Openly embracing the doctrine of Marcion" (Merkley 2001, 76–77). He closes his book with this comment: "It is simply too soon to know whether the work done by forces dedicated to Jewish-Christian reconciliation ... will stand against the flanking effort of the neo-Marcionists, whose heart is in the different work of accomodating [*sic*] the secular liberals, the Churches of the East, and the Muslims" (Merkley 2001, 220).

Given the intensity of this contemporary rhetoric, Lawrence Stratton's brief but careful attention to the history of Christian Zionism is a welcome addition to this conversation. By outlining this history, Stratton exposes the mechanism by which Palestinian Christians have, as Cohen phrased it, "come to be largely invisible to the West" (33), especially in the North American context. Unfortunately, this invisibility is far more active than what Stratton describes as "the indifference of many American Christians to their brothers and sisters in Christ" (58). If American theopolitical discourse surrounding Israel/Palestine is afflicted by the scriptural categories of domination discussed earlier, it is largely due to the deep influence of Christian Zionists on the highest levels of American government. How else would one contextualize a December 2001 speech by Oklahoma Senator

James Inhofe (R-OK), in which the 9/11 attacks were explained in terms of U.S. policy toward Israel? "We came under attack," proclaimed Inhofe, because "we are Israel's best friend." Going on to quote Genesis 13, Inhofe concluded with this observation: "God appeared to Abram and said, 'I am giving you *this* land,' the *West Bank*. This is not a political battle at all. It is a contest over whether or not the word of God is true" (Inhofe 2001). How else does one explain House Majority Leader Tom Delay (R-TX) going before the Knesset in July 2003 to state, "I stand before you today, in solidarity, as an Israeli of the heart"? Casting his speech in decidedly Manichean terms, pitting unqualified good against unmitigated evil in the "struggle" between "freedom and terrorism," DeLay proclaimed that "Israel's liberation from Palestinian terror is an essential component of ... victory" (DeLay 2003).

We must take seriously the roots of Christian Zionist influence in the United States, including its conscious linkage with expansionist, oppressive ideologies like "Manifest Destiny." While explored by various scholars (see Davidson 2001), this linkage has been forcefully made by Robert Allen Warrior (1989) and waits to be solidified through a more intensive synthesis between his work and that of Native American liberation theologian George Tinker (1993 and 2004). Thus, while Ratzman opens his response by recalling the provocative description of Palestinians as "the Jews of the Arab world" (65), it can also be asserted that Palestinians are the Native Americans of the Arab world.

I am an enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation, one of the many tribes ethnically cleansed from the area around Georgia and—by way of the "Trail of Tears"—forcibly transferred into what was *then* called Indian Territory. When you drive on I-35 in what is now Oklahoma, you see a little sign welcoming you to the Chickasaw Nation. But a new casino is our primary expression of sovereignty. I do not wish to denigrate my people. Even mixed-bloods like me are proud of our heritage and our accomplishments in the land once called Indian Territory. But we *also* know that even though Chickasaws were among those who adapted so thoroughly to white ways that we were counted among a group known as the "Five Civilized Tribes," our early adaptation and accommodation did *nothing* to ensure our continued survival in our ancestral land.

To confuse the categories of *ethnos* even further, do these histories of displacement, suffering, and refusal to assimilate present at least faint echoes of Jewish experience? With all the dissimilarity between these three nations, one major difference, once again referencing Cohen, is pertinent to our conversation: only one out of the three has succeeded in its goal of establishing and sustaining a viable state. The Chickasaw Nation has borders, but they are permeable beyond the rights of private property. Similarly (but, at present, far more violently) Palestinians are repressed by the continuing realities of 1917, 1948 and 1967 and, more bureaucratically though also physically, by what Jeff Halper has labeled the "Matrix of Control" (Halper 2002).

As Ratzman points out and as I discuss in my original paper, it is no secret that Zionism, even in is variegated forms, is itself a contested expression of Jewish identity. What is less known, especially outside the Jewish community, is that the goal achieved in 1948 has, in relation to post-Holocaust concerns, necessitated a reformulation of Jewish ethical commitments and practices. Now simply accepted, these changes were positively presented to the American Jewish community in a series of essays by Rabbi Irving Greenberg (Greenberg 1981; 1988). The ethical compromises necessary for Jewish participation in the phenomena of state power have facilitated its 'special relationship' with the United States, Emil Fackenheim's warnings concerning continued Jewish dependency on an outside power notwithstanding.[2] Most recently, in the wake of 9/11, Israel was able to reassert its utility to American interests; the "US-Israeli alliance, self-proclaimed as Western," was given new life as the smaller state marketed

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2 "Except among the theologically or humanly perverse, Zionism—the commitment to the safety and genuine sovereignty of the State of Israel—is not negotiable. Nor can it be weakened or obscured in dialogue with Christians. But Zionism, as just defined, must after Auschwitz be a Christian commitment as well. No less than Jews themselves, Christians must wish Jewish existence to be liberated from dependence on charity. On behalf of their partners in dialogue, they must wish independence from charity-in-general. On behalf of their own Christianity, they must wish it from Christian charity-in-particular" (Fackenheim 1994, 284–85).

This theme was echoed by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu during his 10 July 1996 address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress: "In the next four years, we will begin the long-term process of gradually reducing the level of your generous economic assistance to Israel." According to the same Library of Congress Report, since fiscal year 1949, the United States has provided Israel with military aid, grants and loans totaling over $90B, including "more than $42B in waived loans" received between 1974 and 2002 (Mark 2003, 3).

itself as an expert combatant against Arab Islamic terrorism (Qureshi and Sells 2003, 7).

Although this close strategic relationship naturally positions Israel at the center of American awareness, Ratzman's question is reasonable: "why is it that Israel-Palestine has become the Chosen Issue?" (66). He briefly offers some possible answers for his question, but moves on to what seems for him to be the crux of the matter: "why is it that we frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an issue with Zionism, essentially disputing the claim that Jews are a nation?" (67). But Ratzman's question begs another: is a rejection of Zionism a denial of Jewish nationhood? Many, many Jews would agree that it is not (see Tekiner, et al., 1989).

In any case, it is by no means condemnatory to observe that in response to modern forms of political legitimacy, a community has sought to constructively respond, in Shlomo Avineri's words, "to the challenges of liberalism and nationalism."[3] A different tack is taken by Hauerwas, whose perspective Ratzman introduces with appreciated nuance. The anti-Constantinian concerns voiced by Hauerwas and other western theologians who warn that "entanglement. . . with the powers-that-be is to be avoided," have little application in the Palestinian context, where Palestinian Christians don't have to work at being "resident aliens."[4] Though effective for Hauerwas's Eurocentric context, and possibly therefore effective for Jews protesting Israel's embodiment of what Marc Ellis has labeled "Constantinian Judaism" (Ellis 2004), it has little to say to an already marginalized community. Perhaps a more apt theopolitical paradigm would be a robust application of Lutheran "two kingdoms" thinking, a perspective that allows the church to be "a force other than the state, other than the way things are in the world" while still remaining thoroughly engaged in

3 Perhaps this statement will mitigate Stratton's "one quibble" of my paper's "blanket description of turn of the twentieth-century Islamic thinkers Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Egyptian Jurist Muhammad 'Abduh as Islamic nationalists" (62). The designation was by no means intended as pejorative.

4 Ratzman could have made equal reference to the Radical Orthodoxy movement, which includes theologians like Milbank, cited above, Catherine Pickstock, William Cavanaugh, Michael Budde, Robin Gill and others.

the world.[5] This tradition challenges the presumptions of Hauerwas, et al., while affirming the work of the ELCJHL.

Still, I hesitate to be too presumptuous in making theological recommendations to Christians living in a context vastly different from my own. Likewise, I find resonance with Ratzman's underlying claim that the oppressor has no warrant to essentialize the oppressed and dictate its modes of resistance. In relation to his own community, Ratzman identifies this pernicious trend in Rosemary Radford Ruether's popular but controversial book, *The Wrath of Jonah*. There, he states, "the [Palestinian-Israeli] conflict is framed as almost exclusively a problem of Jewish nationalism and Western imperialism." Ratzman bristles at what he perceives to be Ruether's definition of ideal Judaism, one that is "powerless, peaceful, and stateless" (71). Ratzman's concerns expose the irony of his earlier statements, however, regarding proper Palestinian Christian political involvement, that is, his assertions that "a truthful Christianity. . . would rightly find an incongruity between nationalism and parts of the Christian textual tradition" (68), and that "Palestinian Christians ought not to be so hung up on the claims of land and peoplehood" since "there are more important things that the Christian is to be concerned about" (69). These statements notwithstanding, Ratzman and I are in agreement regarding his notion that "Christian Palestinians are the Jews of the Palestinians" because, "as religious minorities, they have an interest in a secular state rather than an Islamic-inflected government" (73). Perhaps this notion can fit within my comprehension of Palestinians as the Native Americans of the Arab world. But maybe we ought not mix too many essentialistic, ethnically-based metaphors!

In asking why the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has become the "Chosen Issue," Ratzman notes the reality of Israel's "preferential treatment from the United States" (67). This is most certainly true, but does not account for recent trends of interest in many mainline Christian circles. A growing awareness of Christian Zionism has led to the realization that the conflict's perpetuation is undergirded not only by strategic arguments but by Chris-

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5 The most helpful recent historical explication of this doctrine and its early application is found in John Witte, Jr., *Law and Protestantism: The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. chap. 3, but also *in passim*.

tian *theology*. North American complicity in the suffering now engulfing both Israelis and Palestinians goes beyond the implications of government policy. With this in mind, I will now close with some guidelines for North American Christians as they approach this thorny theopolitical matter.

To be effective voices for peace in the land of Israel/Palestine, North American Christians must develop a theopolitical approach independent of dominant political expressions. Jesus calls his disciples to be peacemakers, not pundits (Matthew 5:9). Just as not all Israeli or Jewish voices call for peace, not all Palestinian voices offer constructive alternatives to the present situation. In all cases, solidarity must consist of *critical* solidarity, not just active sympathy. As Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:15–16). To stand in critical solidarity with Palestinians and Israelis who seek peace in the land they inhabit—a stand that goes beyond lobbying, beyond more position papers—North American Christians must first develop a hermeneutic of justice, a lens through which events and commitments are interpreted.

Moreover, we must acknowledge that we approach this conflict not as righteous innocents but as empowered perpetrators. We offer our critiques with humility, knowing that they are tainted by our legacies. Though repudiating both, we inherit a tradition of theological anti-Judaism and a legacy of murderous anti-Semitism: two factors that led to the founding of Israel as a modern nation-state and the subsequent displacement of Palestinians. On the other hand, we are also aware of our inherited traditions of anti-Islamic thought and how this perspective has fed into anti-Palestinian bias. Nevertheless, we believe that we have been called to a ministry of reconciliation in Israel/Palestine (2 Cor. 5:18), a ministry made more urgent by our long history of negative contributions.

Western Christians also inherit a tradition of selfish ambition toward the land of Israel/Palestine. Understanding that our attachment to the land (or any land) has little grounding in theological obligation, we assert that the defense or reconstruction of Christendom is a vainglorious hope. Still, we acknowledge that this hope is a central concern of western imperialism—cultural, economic and military—inherited from our Constantinian heritage. By separating ourselves from imperial designs on the land of Is-

rael/Palestine, we are freed to be not "pro-Israeli," not "pro-Palestinian," but "pro-Justice." Instead of looking only to our self-interest, we must take seriously our calling, our *vocatio*, to "Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute" (Proverbs 31:8).

This is the hope of a message for international visitors posted in the narthex of the Anglican Cathedral of St. George in East Jerusalem, a message with which I now close: *Let us pray not for Arab or Jew, not for Palestinian or Israeli, but let us pray rather for ourselves, that we might not divide them in our prayers but keep them both together in our hearts. Amen.*

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KOINONIA XVII (2005) 93-104

Hell and Hope in Balthasar: The Substitutionary Character of Christ's Descent into Hell and its Implications for the Extent of the Atonement

JOHN L. DRURY

While Hans urs Balthasar's reflections on Christ's Descent into Hell have won him accolades, his expressed views on the hope that all will be saved have sparked controversy. In the face of such a mixed reaction, one wonders whether the two thoughts have any connection. Is Balthasar's hope grounded in Christ's Descent? What is the relationship between Christ's experience of Hell and ours? In what follows, I will argue that such a connection does exist in Balthasar, and that the link in the chain is the substitutionary character of Christ's Descent into Hell.

In order to draw out this connection, I will closely engage Balthasar's *Mysterium Paschale* and *Dare We Hope "That All Men Be Saved"?* In order to clarify the language, I will first lay out Balthasar's careful distinction between Hades and Hell. I will then turn to the substitutionary element in Balthasar's treatment of the Descent. From there we will be able to follow his discussion of the extent of atonement and redemption. I will conclude with some critical comments.[1]

HADES AND HELL

What is the difference between Hades and Hell? What difference does this difference make? For Balthasar, this difference is crucial. They are two

1 For an excellent survey of recent literature on Balthasar, a treatment of his account of the Descent, and its relation to Karl Barth, see David Edward Lauber, *Towards a Theology of Holy Saturday: Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar on the* descensus ad inferna (Unpublished PTS Ph.D. diss., 1999).

very different "places," and they come into existence at different times. This spatial and temporal difference can only be seen in light of the drama of Christ's Descent into Hell. Therefore, the insights Balthasar gleans on the difference between Hades and Hell is a byproduct of his overall theological method.[2] He tries his best to shy away from *a priori* concepts in order to reason *a posteriori* from the narratives of Jesus Christ. As Balthasar explains, "The passage [from Hades to Hell] is, theologically, a leap, and it can only be grounded on Christology."[3]

So what does attending to the drama of Christ's Descent tell us about the difference between Hades and Hell? Balthasar begins by arranging a whole host of biblical concepts under the more general concept of Hades. For the sake of understanding, I will lay them out on a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum is death and the grave. The Old Testament concept of Sheol is further down the spectrum, although sometimes Balthasar uses it as a synonym for Hades (*MP* 153). Sheol simply stands for the place of the dead (*MP* 161). In Sheol all commerce with God is cut off, yet the idea of active divine judgment does not come into play. The later Jewish idea of Gehenna, however, does include "active aversion on God's part" (*MP* 75). It can therefore be placed at the far end of the spectrum.

Yet even Gehenna is only a development within the larger idea of Hades. It is best understood as the lower or worse part of Hades. Even Paradise is located within Hades. Gehenna and Paradise are simply two options within Sheol: one for reward, the other for punishment (*MP* 75). This kind of thinking can be found in Augustine when he speaks of a higher and a lower *infernum* (*MP* 162). It also explains why Lazarus, located in "Abraham's Bosom," can speak to the rich man in Gehenna.

What is the character of Hades? For Balthasar, death "affects the whole person, though not necessarily to the point of obliterating the human subject altogether" (*MP* 148). Though the person remains a genuine subject, all activity is ended. It is a state of pure passivity. Therefore, the charac-

2 Balthasar discusses his own method at length in vol. 1 of *Theo-Drama,* trans., Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988). For an insightful study on the background of his method, see Francesca Murphy, "'Whence Comes this Love as Strong as Death?' The Presence of Franz Rosenzweig's 'Philosophy as Narrative' in Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Theo-Drama*" *Literature and Theology* 7 (Summer 1993): 227-247.

3 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. Aidan Nichols (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 171. Hereafter cited in text as *MP*.

ter of Hades is primarily spiritual (*MP* 163). The development of the idea of Gehenna shows that a person in Hades may experience torments and judgment. However, Balthasar is careful to point out that such a punishment for sin is limited. The population of Hades does not bear the full weight of damnation (*MP* 167).

This limitation is the constitutive difference between Hell and Hades. Hell is the place where the full weight of sin is carried. To this place none had gone, until Christ. The significance of Christ's Descent is not just his solidarity with the dead in Hades but his carrying of sin into Hell. In a sense, Hell did not exist before Christ. Christ creates it by being the first to go there (*MP* 173). This is the "theological replacement of Hades by Hell... Hell in the New Testament sense is a function of the Christ event" (*MP* 172). Therefore, the good news of the Descent touches all the members of Hades—from Paradise to Gehenna.

So Hades and Hell for Balthasar are not only different "locations" but also separated by time. Hell properly so called is the "second death" (*MP* 168). Hades properly so called is simply the place of the dead. All the developments within the Jewish religion up to Jesus' time were merely variations on Hades. It was the Christ event that crosses the bridge from Hades to Hell.

How can this be? How can a change in the structure of the afterlife occur in a moment? One might regard Balthasar's lumping of all pre-Christ afterlife material under the contingent category of Hades to suggest a sort of "progressive revelation." Such a critique misses the significance of Balthasar's Christocentrism. It is not that revelation is progressive in a general sense. Rather, revelation has a definitive center in Christ, to which all other revelatory material is relative. Such logic is deeply imbedded in the New Testament, as Balthasar intimates in his comment on the book of Hebrews:

> It is in the Letter to the Hebrews that we are really present at the birth of the concept. Before the Christological *hapax*, nothing, either in this world or in the world to come, is absolutely definitive. But, thanks to the uniqueness of Christ, man comes to the unique and definitive decision (*MP* 171).

Of course, Balthasar regards many of Jesus' teachings about the afterlife as descriptive of Hades. Yet even the words of Christ are relative to his definitive action, since "the pre-Easter Jesus lives toward his 'hour.'"[4] To the substitutionary character of this hour we shall now turn.

THE SUBSTITUTIONARY CHARACTER OF THE DESCENT INTO HELL

For Balthasar, the drama of Good Friday is unmistakably the drama of substitution.[5] He speaks clearly of the wrath of God being poured out onto Christ (*MP* 101). But can the same be said of Holy Saturday? Does Balthasar think that Christ went to Hell as our substitute? Balthasar's account of the Descent into Hell is replete with the language and logic of substitution.[6]

In order to sensibly speak of the Descent as substitutionary, Balthasar must remove the myth of the harrowing of Hell from the center of the discussion. An inappropriate focus on Christ's *activity* in Hell would preclude the language of substitution. If there is victory in the Descent, it is brought about through *passivity* (*MP* 150). Holy Saturday should be seen "as forming part of the vicarious Passion properly so called" (*MP* 170). It was the ultimate result of bearing the wrath of God toward sin. That Christ "preached" in Hell is biblical, but should not be taken in the sense of persuasion, but rather an objective announcement *to* the dead by the sheer fact of his solidarity *with* the dead (*MP* 159).

Balthasar replaces triumphant harrowing with suffering solidarity. Christ goes to Hell in the same way as all the dead go down. This "law of solidarity" (165) overrides any thought of Christ's activity in Hell. Rather, he is *like* the dead and *with* the dead. Why does Balthasar place such a rigorous emphasis on solidarity? One might be inclined to see the prin-

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4 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope "That All Men Be Saved"? with a Short Discourse on Hell*, trans. David Kipp and Lothar Krauth (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 22. Hereafter cited in text as *DWH*.

5 cf. *MP* 89-140. Glenn W. Olsen provides a stimulating discussion of the language of substitution in "Hans Urs Balthasar and the Rehabilitation of St. Anselm's Doctrine of the Atonement," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34:1 (1981) 49-61.

6 For an elucidation that is consistent with, yet less straightforward than *MP*, see vol. IV of *Theo-Drama: The Action* (Transl. by Graham Harrison; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994) 205-423.

ciple of solidarity as an end in itself in order to uphold the pathos of God. Though Balthasar in no way excludes the suffering of God, it is not his point here. Rather, solidarity does conceptual work in the service of the more dominant theme of substitution. When drawing out the significance of solidarity, Balthasar writes, "in order to assume the entire penalty imposed upon sinners, Christ willed not only to die, but to go down, in his soul, *ad infernum*" (*MP* 164). The penalty of sin is death, for both body and soul. The penalty was not limited to the body, but "was also a penalty [which] affected the soul, for sinning was also the soul's work, and the soul paid the price in being deprived of the vision of God" (*MP* 164). "[H]e took, by substitution, that whole experience upon himself" (*MP* 168). On the cross, Christ experienced in solidarity with us and as a substitute for us the death of the body. In the Descent, Christ experienced in solidarity with us and as a substitute for us the death of the soul - the second death. Christ's "standing for sinful man before God" was made complete in the Descent (*MP* 161).

It is precisely in the context of substitution that solidarity finds its meaning and limit. As explained above, those who died before Christ were held back from the fullness of punishment. They were suspended in Hades rather than dropped into Hell. Jesus Christ, according to Balthasar, was the first to experience Hell. And he experienced it *for them*. In order for the Descent into Hell to be truly substitutionary, it must be **unique**. "[F]or the death of Christ to be inclusive, it must be simultaneously exclusive and unique in its expiatory value" (*MP* 168). In his solidarity with us, he went beyond us. As Balthasar eloquently writes, "[T]he Redeemer placed himself, by substitution, in the supreme solitude" (*MP* 181).

The intimate connection between solidarity, substitution, and uniqueness is summarized in the following passage:

> This experience has no need to be anything other than what is implied by a real *solidarity* with the inhabitants of Sheol that no redemptive light has brightened. For all redemptive light comes *uniquely* from the one who was in solidarity until the end. And he can communicate it because he, *substitutionally*, renounced it (*MP* 172, italics added).

Here it becomes clear why the Descent must not be regarded as a triumphant harrowing of Hell. For Christ to communicate his redemptive light

to the dead, he must be in solidarity with them. And yet the very basis of his redemption is that he substitutionally and uniquely went beyond them to the very depths of Hell.

It is here that the note of triumph can return, for the Descent into Hell did accomplish something. It was an accomplishment by means of passivity and solidarity, but a real accomplishment nevertheless. By going the distance, Christ took to Hell the sins of the world that were placed on him. In a sense, Christ's Descent into Hell created a place for sin (cf. *MP* 173). Hell, for Balthasar, is "a *product* of the Redemption" (*MP* 174). In his passive state, Christ triumphed by means of a contemplative vision of sin. He did not merely see sinners as individuals or as a group, for that would only be a Descent into *Hades* in solidarity. No, Christ descended into *Hell*, contemplating our sin itself in all its chaos and horror. And he saw it for us. He saw it as our substitute.

THE EXTENT OF ATONEMENT AND REDEMPTION

Balthasar's illuminating reflections cannot help but raise serious questions about Hell as a real possibility for us. If Christ was the first to experience Hell, is he also the last? Does uniqueness imply exclusivity? Balthasar claims, "The object of this *visio mortis* cannot be a populated Hell, for then it would be the contemplation of a defeat" (*MP* 173). Yet he holds back from the implication that Hell is for Christ and Christ alone:

> But the desire to conclude from this that all human beings, before and after Christ, are henceforth saved, that Christ by his experience of Hell has emptied Hell, so that all fear of damnation is now without object, is a surrender to the opposite extreme. We shall have cause to speak of this again later, but even at this stage we have to say that precisely here the distinction between Hades and Hell acquires its theological significance. In raising from the dead, Christ leaves behind him Hades, that is, the state in which humanity is cut off from access to God. But, by virtue of his deepest Trinitarian experience, he takes 'Hell' with him, as the expression of his power to dispose, as judge, the everlasting salvation or the everlasting loss of man (*MP* 177).

At first glance, such a statement cuts off a discussion of the extent of atonement and redemption. But upon further reflection, it becomes clear that Balthasar is simply leaving the question open at this point. For Balthasar,

Christ's substitutionary Descent into Hell does not automatically imply universal redemption. But he is aware that it begs the question. And Balthasar does take up this question directly in *Dare We Hope*.[7]

In order to make explicit the subtle connection between *Mysterium Paschale* and *Dare We Hope*, I will discuss four areas of overlap relevant to the extent of the atonement: (1) the nature of the atonement, (2) exegetical issues, (3) temporal issues, and (4) the relation of divine and human agency. It is clear that the thoughts in the latter text do not flow directly from the argument of the former. Rather, the latter simply picks up questions posed but not adequately addressed by the former.[8]

(1) *The Nature of Atonement*. As we saw, the Descent into Hell has an unquestionable substitutionary character for Balthasar. But if Christ went to Hell in our place, does Hell remain a real possibility for us? If the penalty for sin has been paid, then it is paid once for all. Therefore, it will not be paid again. Balthasar reacts negatively to such an argument by necessity. He finds such thinking too systematic (*MP* 181). He prefers a more dramatic or narratological approach. The substitution of Jesus was certainly for all those who came before him. They were held in Hades, protected from the fullness of the wrath of God. He went to Hell in their place. But he emerges now with the keys to Hell. Hell is his. He can do with it what he wills. Therefore, Balthasar does not settle the question of the *extent* of the atonement by reflecting on the *nature* of the atonement. A universal substitutionary atonement does necessarily result in a universal redemption. Such systematizing spoils the freedom of Christ's story. Nevertheless, the conjunction of universal language with substitutionary language cannot help but give hope that all will be saved.

(2) *Exegetical Issues*. The discussion becomes much more complicated when Balthasar turns to particular biblical texts. In *Dare We Hope*, he observes two strands of biblical texts regarding the extent of redemption. There is one strand that focuses on the separation of humanity into the

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7 For a review of the current debate in which Balthasar plays a key role, cf. John R. Sachs, "Current Eschatology: Universal Salvation and the Problem of Hell," *Theological Studies* 52 (1991): 227-254.

8 The connection between atonement and eschatology is presented in a tighter but less concise manner in vol. V of *Theo-Drama: The Last Act*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 247-321.

saved and the damned. The warning passages of Jesus and Paul fall under this heading. The other strand expresses both God's intent and accomplishment of universal redemption. These are especially prominent in, though not limited to, Paul. Romans 9:32, 2 Cor. 5:14, Col. 1:20, I Tim. 2:4-5, and 2 Pet. 3:9 all stand out. He argues at length that the first strand are not to be regarded as a "report" of things to come (*DWH* 32-33). Furthermore, judgment in Paul does not necessarily mean final separation (*DWH* 34). Rather, all of these passages of threat and judgment simply but clearly place the Christian *under judgment*. This very existential location before God limits one from synthesizing the two strands. One is rather obligated to take seriously the threat of judgment, while also hearing the good news that God intends all to be saved.

(3) *Temporal Issues*. The topic of time and eternity always manages to muddy the water. But it is a necessary aspect of Balthasar's reflection. He explicitly states, "In this final state, there is no time" (*MP* 50). What does this imply for the temporality of Christ's contemplative vision of an unpopulated Hell? Was this empty Hell a vision of what Hell will always be in its timelessness? If any were to be sent to Hell, would not Christ have witnessed their timeless Descent? If he saw none in Hell, surely none will ever be there. Although this line of thinking is interesting, it is important to note that the timelessness of Hell is not the same as the eternity of God. Eternity transcends rather than merely abandons time. Hell is not eternal properly so called. It is rather a "total withdrawal of any temporal dimension" (*DWH* 129). If Heaven is "above" time, then Hell is "below" it. Therefore, no conclusion can be drawn from Christ's vision of an empty Hell. The situation is much the same as with the nature of the atonement and the exegetical reflection: left wide open.

(4) *Divine and Human Agency*. If the redemptive purpose of Christ's Descent into Hell is universal, as Balthasar maintains, then we cannot help but wonder whether this divine passivity will be universally effective.

> The question is whether God, with respect to his plan of salvation, ultimately depends, and wants to depend, upon man's choice; or whether his freedom, which wills only salvation and is absolute, might not remain above things human, created, and therefore relative (*DWH* 15).

In approaching this question, Balthasar tries to avoid two temptations. The one assumes that God simply depends on human choice. Many theologians too quickly run to the distinction between the absolute and contingent will of God. God's will is not so easily resisted. The other temptation is trying to know too much about the future by structuring necessities between divine intent and result, and therefore turning possibilities into actualities. Both temptations work with *a priori* assumptions about how divine and human agency work. Both are too easy. Both try to know too much.

The answer Balthasar finally gives by to his question is that both are possible. The first is the object of fear, while the second is the object of hope. The possibility remains that God's love could "one day lose its patience, with the result that he would be forced to proceed on the basis of sheer (punitive) justice" (*DWH* 165). We can only hope that the relation of divine-human agency will not remain an ellipse with two foci (divine and human) but converge to a circle with a single focus (divine). Balthasar claims that "hope outweighs fear" (*DWH* 44). The relation between the two is not systematic, but personal. Hopeful fear, not certain knowledge, is the proper position of the Christian. It is God's way of throwing our question back at us. "From being personally addressed in this way, it follows that I may leave concern for the salvation of others up to divine mercy and must concentrate on my own situation before God." (*DWH* 87).

CRITICAL REFLECTION

It has been shown that Balthasar's hope that all will be saved dealt with the questions left open by his reflections on Christ's Descent into Hell. Although he rejects any systematic conclusions, he takes seriously the implications of the substitutionary character of Christ's Descent into Hell. In what follows, I aim to offer an appreciative yet critical commentary on the significance of Balthasar's reflections.

(1) *Christocentric reflection on Hell.* Christian discussions of Hell seldom begin with the article of faith that Christ went there. Balthasar's *a posteriori* reflection on the drama of Jesus is radical and yet traditional. It is radical inasmuch as it opens new avenues of reflection. But it is traditional in that it takes seriously the Christian commitment that Jesus Christ

is the center and sense of Scripture. I would only like to comment that the threefold office may have been helpful. The threefold office carves logical space for the aspects of the Descent into Hell that Balthasar wishes to suppress under the aspect of substitution. Although he justly brings the priestly office into the foreground, he could have made room for the biblical themes of victory and preaching under the offices of king and prophet.

(2) *Recovery of Substitutionary Atonement.* Balthasar has made a thorough recovery of the wrath of God for atonement theology. He set substitutionary thinking in a creative key, and applied it to a new area of reflection. By characterizing the Descent as substitutionary, he has freed it from being the sole property of mythic imagery and ransom theories (cf. *MP* 174). It also makes talk of the "death of God" more than rhetoric. By linking solidarity with substitution, divine pathos not only suffers *with* us but also accomplishes something *for* us. The presence of Balthasar in a modern theological context proves that judicial thinking about the atonement, despite its bad reputation, has not reached its theological end.

(3) *Significance of the Resurrection.* By bringing the Descent into the foreground, Balthasar has raised the material significance of the resurrection of Jesus. Creed and liturgy both point to the significance of the whole *triduum*. If no one comes to the Father except through the Son, and the Son is dead on Holy Saturday, then Easter really accomplishes something. Such an apprehension can make sense of the salvific nature assigned to the resurrection by the speeches in Acts and numerous comments in Paul. If Balthasar's account of Luther and Calvin limiting Christ's experience of Hell to the cross is correct then his critique is telling (*MP* 169). The resurrection for Balthasar is more than the revelation of the cross. It is Christ's return from Hell. Of course, in following Balthasar one must be careful to not let Saturday and Sunday overshadow Friday. The cross still remains the central Christian symbol and the keystone to the New Testament.

(4) *Reverence.* One cannot help but appreciate Balthasar's reverent approach to the question of the possibility of Hell. He makes the question personal and not just speculative. As we deal with the matter we are under judgment. This bars us from quick or easy hope for the salvation of all. It also bars us from quick and easy assumptions that many or even any will be damned. Rather, our responsibility as Christians is prayerful

hope. He supports this call to hope by the observation that 1 Tim. 2:4-5, which teaches the divine intent for the salvation of all, is set by v. 1 in the context of prayer (*DWH* 35). This is not his only defense, but it is certainly the most compelling. Even in the midst of this reverent hope, one might wonder what the church can teach. What about the non-Christian neighbor? What does neighborly love demand? Only prayerful hope? May there also be a genuine concern for the other that would call forth witness? Or is Balthasar's personal focus ultimately self-centered? In his avoidance of systematization, Balthasar manages to leave some practical questions unattended.

(5) *The Doctrine of God.* A God who is in solidarity with death has obvious pastoral rewards.[9] But Balthasar's reflections on the hope for universal redemption are equally significant. He manages to keep a clear distinction and a tight unity between atonement and redemption. This enables him to hold in tension divine and human agency. For Protestant readers caught between Reformed and Arminian influences, Balthasar throws a wrench in the engine. Neither option seems so obvious. By calling for hope rather than knowledge, the logic of necessity and possibility that plagues the discussion is cast in a new light. For Balthasar, only an unbaptized doctrine of God assumes *a priori* that all divine actions are irresistible. Yet it is an equally unbaptized doctrine of God that assumes *a priori* that human agency is necessarily protected from God's power. The Reformed tradition can learn from Balthasar to leave open the question as to "whether God, with respect to his plan of salvation, ultimately depends on man's choice" (*DWH* 15). The Arminian tradition can learn from Balthasar that the proper response to "whether [God's] freedom, which wills only salvation and is absolute, might not remain above things human, created, and therefore relative" (*DWH* 15) is a genuine hope that God's freedom will overpower the wills of all human beings. By stirring the pot in this way, the stale conversation might be given new life. It seems that in the Roman Catholic Balthasar, the old intra-Protestant debates may have an unlikely yet indispensable dialogue partner.

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9 cf. Gordon Mursell, "The Descent into Hell: Hans Urs von Balthasar and Pastoral Theology" in *Resurrection: Essays in Honour of Leslie Houlden,* ed. Stephen Barton (London: SPCK, 1994), 154-164.

Acquainted with Grief: Wang Mingdao's Stand for the Persecuted Church in China. By Thomas Alan Harvey. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002, 190 pages.

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom: Rebellion and the Blasphemy of Empire. By Thomas H. Reilly. Seattle and London: University of Washington, 2004, 235 pages.

Although these works describe events separated by a century, they are unique in providing theological reflection on major historical shifts in Christianity in China. Both represent substantial dialogues between academic sinology and theology. Harvey and Reilly move comfortably between narrative description and theological investigation; each is concerned with how a marginal or sectarian Christian community was influenced by its Chinese locale. Both works are also written with axes to grind against a prevailing wisdom. Reilly seeks to rehabilitate the Taiping as a form of Chinese Christianity against charges of syncretism and heresy. Harvey wants to defend the fundamentalist Wang Mingdao (1901-1991) as a martyr to Communism and its sympathetic liberal voices. Neither book wholly succeeds, but both point to an important shift in the study of Chinese Christianity.

Reilly's book describes the Taiping Rebellion, and the primary strength of the book is that it treats the religious intent of the Taiping more seriously, and also treats the Taiping within the history of Christianity. Reilly's thesis will be astonishing to many readers: the Taiping Rebellion—whose leader, Hong Xiuquan, claimed to be Jesus's younger brother—should be seen as a form of Chinese Christianity. Reilly writes:

> While not the most orthodox formulation—he saw himself as the younger brother of Jesus—Hong's solution was a triumph of theological insight for which he receives no praise or even recognition. These works have failed to recognize and affirm that the Taiping religion was not 90 percent Anglo-American Protestant and 10 percent Chinese popular religion, or vice versa. Taiping religion was something new: fully Christian, albeit with Chinese popular religious elements; fully Chinese, albeit inspired by Anglo-American Protestantism. These elements all played a part in the creation of Taiping Christianity, but the creation transcended the sum total of the parts. (13)

This is indeed a remarkable claim. Reilly is correct that the religious genius of Hong has been little treated or largely psychologized rather than understood as a cohesive worldview, but to speak of the Taiping as "fully Christian" is, at the least, challenging. The Taiping themselves seem to have realized that their teachings transgressed classical formulations, and they proposed viewpoints that orthodox Christians could not accept. Reilly notes that the Taiping were fundamentally unitarian, but does not see this as detracting from his attempt to define them as Christian.

To support his claim, Reilly provides some important work. He offers an extensive study of the Catholic background in China (which actually takes up nearly a quarter of the short volume), and studies the Protestants who influenced Hong. He examines parallels to popular religion, that included an emphasis on heaven and hell and millennial visions. Reilly's analysis of contemporary Protestant literature in Chinese is limited, and this often leads to unfair characterizations of contemporary figures, such as Liang Fa.

An interesting discussion deals with how Jesus should be described in Chinese. Should "messiah" be transliterated or should a local analogy be drawn? How does Hong's proposal for a Kingdom of God mesh with or differ from other Christian understandings? Also helpful is Reilly's analysis of how the Taiping drew on Protestant iconoclasm and Chinese indigenous traditions (for instance, Confucius appeared as a problematic figure in Hong's visions).

If Reilly does a fair job of discussing Chinese religious tradition, his theological analysis is often weaker. For instance, Reilly compares the Taiping founder Hong's emphasis on a realized eschatology—the kingdom here and now, being brought in by Hong—to contemporary liberation theologians' focus on the kingdom of God. Of course, Hong's theology is no closer to contemporary liberationists than would be David Koresh's or many cult leaders. Similarly, Reilly criticizes the younger William Milne for transmitting the statement that blaspheming the Spirit is unpardonable; Reilly seems oblivious to the fact that this is actually a Biblical quote (Matt. 12.31). The charge that Reilly makes about which I am most ambivalent is the claim that Jesus's title should have been translated better into Chinese by early Catholics and Protestants. He believes that this was

a central strength of the Taiping. In reality, Christians did use other titles for Jesus in Chinese ("savior," "lord," "son of God," etc.), but Reilly's argument that missionary theology tended to privilege Western traditions over Chinese is well taken.

In contrast to Reilly's syncretic interests, Harvey presents an approach that focuses on a dualism. Harvey speaks of "two paths" that emerged in Chinese Christianity; one "modernist" and one "evangelical" (28). At both the start of his book he says that one need only know two people to understand contemporary Chinese Christianity: the Patriotic Church leader Bishop Ding and the fundamentalist independent leader Wang Mingdao.

As biography, Harvey's book is absolutely compelling. It an easy read and is very instructive for theologians who wish to look beyond the West for questions about Christian witness and the State. Important sections treat the entrance of missionary/denominational Chinese leaders into the government-run Patriotic Church formed by the Communists in 1949; the creation of the "Christian Manifesto" supporting the Chinese Communist state in 1950; and sections on Wang's own upbringing, imprisonment, confession and recantation, and eventual freedom. Throughout the book, Harvey's dominant argument is that the liberal, missionary-educated leaders essentially aposticized to a modernist theological agenda that bowed before the State, where a fewer number of figures such as Wang were willing to suffer for their faith.

In retrospect, it is clear that the hundreds of thousands who signed on to the Christian Manifesto in 1950 were indeed part of a slippery slope that would soon lead to a total moratorium on the public practice of faith. Moreover, the story of Wang is instructive as a story of individual integrity and of Christian witness.

At the same time, and because of the current situation in China, the role of Patriotic Church leaders as well as house church prototypes in the style of Wang makes this topic especially sensitive. Harvey shows how a range of contemporaries responded to Wang. He helps the readers to see the pitfalls of Wang's modernist Chinese adversaries (YT Wu), missionary historians who saw the Communist Revolution as divine judgment (David Paton), and even of those who defended Wang not on theological grounds but as a supposedly model anti-Communist (Leslie Lyall). In fact, says

Harvey, "Wang had no desire to see the government overthrown, and he would have chastised as idolatry those who see salvation in representative liberal democracy" (109).

Unfortunately, Harvey's critique does not add up to a persuasive Christian social ethic. Harvey's polemic against those who became the Christian mouth for the state, and even the poignant story of Wang himself, do not argue for a positive Christian theology. These examples can serve as cautionary tales, but is Wang's congregational, authoritarian, and fundamentalist model really one that the church should emulate? Harvey compares Wang to both Bonhoeffer and Barth, and sees the Patriotic Church as paralleling Germany's National Christians. But does Wang's witness compare to the ecumenical witness of Barmen? And isn't Wang's pacifism different from Bonhoeffer's?

I believe that Harvey chose Wang as a model because he fit the Hauerwasian, anti-Christendom, anti-liberal model that Harvey himself favors. However, Wang's example is essentially quietistic and sectarian. It is often unclear that Wang is actually "anti-liberal," so much as he is separatist or isolationist. Wang opposed the missionary churches and he opposed formal affiliation of any type with other Chinese churches. There is no sense from reading this book of what "the Church" actually is for Wang.

As a confessor (in the classical Christian sense of the word) Wang's faithfulness deserves study and imitation; as a guide to how Christians in China today should live, his approach is less helpful. If one thing is clear it is this: there are more than two paths in contemporary Chinese Christianity. There are evangelical patriotic churches and liberal patriotic churches. There are sectarians, fundamentalists, and quietly faithful house church members. There are Catholics who are members of the Patriotic Church and of the underground Roman Catholic Church and even of both at the same time. There are "cultural Christians" (who sympathize with Christianity for its social utility) as well as all manner of academic, nominal, and other Christians.

Reilly and Harvey are part of a new scholarly tradition. They go beyond treating Christianity in China as missionary colonialism and appraise different indigenous appropriations. Both draw on contemporary sinological literature. Reilly's book began as a dissertation at the University of Wash-

ington, and Harvey's dissertation was completed under Stanley Hauerwas at Duke but included substantial sinological research. As books revised from dissertations, both of these works seem short and could have benefited from better documentation and more extensive support. Nonetheless, they tackle fertile ground that has been badly in need of study. Despite the fact that the Taiping was the largest revolution ever at the time that it occurred, its theological arguments have been little studied. Similarly, the evangelical surge in the early twentieth century that produced Wang and his contemporaries has received comparatively little academic research.

Both of these works are helpful in asking, "how can or should Christianity in China look?" Reilly shows us how the Taiping religious synthesis was a unique creation, and arguably an indigenous form of Christianity. Harvey demonstrates the liabilities of a type of Christianity that eagerly invests itself in the state. However, if Christianity should be neither sectarian revolt nor the ideological sympathizers of totalitarianism, can it be something else? Between the poles of quietism and Christendom, how many forms can the Church take and retain its integrity? Both of these books move us a little further along in answering these questions.

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Thinking About Christ With Schleiermacher. By Catherine L. Kelsey. Westminster John Knox Press, 2003, vii and 126 pages.

Typically, a volume dedicated to articulating the complex theological thought of Friedrich Schleiermacher assumes that the reader already possesses a fair degree of theological knowledge and expertise. The great value of this volume is Catherine Kelsey's clear and precise exposition of Schleiermacher's systematic theology and her intention of making his thought available to a much broader audience. On both counts the author has succeeded nicely. Kelsey insists that one need not be a biblical scholar or philosopher to benefit from a study of this great theologian. Thus, the tutorial style of the book's format, in which the reader is invited periodically to pause and to "explore Schleiermacher's conceptual portrait of Christ and think alongside the theologian" (5), encourages a lively en-

gagement by even the most novice of theological students. At the same time, those who wish to delve more deeply into his thought are provided with the appropriate selections from Schleiermacher's magnum opus, *The Christian Faith*, where they can further investigate the ideas explored in this book. Kelsey does not assume that the reader needs to see eye-to-eye with all of Schleiermacher's theology to benefit from a reading of his work. Indeed, this book encourages even those who find themselves opposed to Schleiermacher's theological conclusions to think more clearly and creatively about their own theological convictions. In that sense Kelsey's work projects a refreshingly ecumenical tone, while at the same time providing the reader with a valuable entrée into Schleiermacher's reflection on the Christian faith.

Kelsey invites the reader to examine Schleiermacher's Christology as if it were a picture, an impressionist painting (20). Presupposing that a viewer interacts with art at many different levels, this first chapter begins with an overall conceptual picture of Schleiermacher's Christology before turning to more detailed examinations in the subsequent six chapters. Kelsey merges Schleiermacher's understanding of Christ's God-consciousness, the significance of redemption in his preaching, and the key propositional elements in his account of Christ to bring the reader to a better understanding of redemption in the community of the faithful. In redemption, the faithful are taken up into Christ's God-consciousness and in doing so become their "truest, most human selves" (18). Indeed, the faithful become that for which they were originally intended, "perfectly open to awareness arising from God" (18). The chapter then closes with an explanation of Schleiermacher's Christology and its relationship to the Chalcedonian definition, an issue much in question for many critics of Schleiermacher's theology.

The next several chapters engage in a more comprehensive assessment of the portrait that is Schleiermacher's Christology: beginning with its frame (Chapter Two), moving to its theme (Chapter Four), and finally examining its more complex details (Chapters Five and Six). Perhaps no theologian's work is more clearly formed by the experience of faith than is Schleiermacher's. Kelsey's "Frame" chapter does a fine job of detailing Schleiermacher's early life at Niesky, his matriculation at Halle, and finally

his subsequent move to Berlin, where he served as a chaplain at the Charity Hospital before turning to his duties at the newly established University of Berlin and as pastor at *Dreifaltigkeits-Kirche*. These biographical details give the reader necessary insight into Schleiermacher's positivist theological methodology, an approach that begins by observing "what is the case at this moment in history" rather than with universal principles (29). Thus it is no surprise when Kelsey concludes that the center of Schleiermacher's dogmatics, Christology, is an explanation of the inner coherence of the faith based on a *living* relationship with Christ, a "gift of grace in encounter with Christ" (35).

In chapter three Kelsey deals more specifically with Schleiermacher's Christology and its implications for redemption. Deftly handling the historical context in which Schleiermacher's thought emerged, she explains the great theologian's insistence on a new "starting point" for understanding redemption. Rejecting reason, ecclesiastical authority, the biblical text, and even the distinctive Christian claims of Christ's resurrection as legitimate starting points (the latter two rely on the early church's expression of faith), Schleiermacher opts for an explanation of redemption in terms of *Urbildlichkeit* ("ideality"), his word for that encounter with Christ that "opens up the possibility of intimate relationship with God" (52). Ultimately, this encounter with Christ leads the believer to reflect further on the hope this decisive encounter inspires, a hope that is already ours and yet always lies before us (55).

Chapters four and five further examine the implications of this outline by first concentrating on Schleiermacher's triple emphases of redemption, sin, and communication. Christ's sinless perfection is constituted in his intimate and unbroken consciousness of God, which is in turn communicated to us in his divinely effected overall life. That this communication takes place most particularly in the context of a community of faith is emphasized by Kelsey when she recounts Schleiermacher's insistence that scripture, apart from the context of community, is ineffective for the purpose of redemption (61), no doubt a conclusion bound to ruffle a few theological feathers. Yet Kelsey is right, I think, in concluding with Schleiermacher that the content of redemption is located in the communication

of Christ's intimate relationship with God, a relationship that is actualized in the dynamic of community.

This attention on redemption then leads to the question of what must indeed be true about Christ in order for this redemption to be real. Here Kelsey artfully reflects Schleiermacher's attempt to articulate a Christology that reflectes both Chalcedonian orthodoxy and his own emphasis on redemption as encounter and relationship with Christ. It is on just this point that subsequent inheritors of the creedal tradition find Schleiermacher most unsatisfactory, and Kelsey offers little here to change that perspective. But again, this is not really the task of this book. That Christ's uniqueness is understood less as a product of a speculative notion of two natures and more in light of his unique apprehension of God's divine influence in every aspect of his life (70-74), does little to inhibit Kelsey's intention that the reader engage Schleiermacher's thought in their own reflection on the person and work of Christ.

In the final two chapters Kelsey delves into additional aspects of the "picture" and closes by posing a number of questions designed to assist the reader in forming his or her own views. Of particular note here is Kelsey's discussion of Schleiermacher's doctrine of the Trinity, especially as it relates to the Christian community's experience of redemption. While his interpretation of the doctrine may not satisfy all who read it, Kelsey finally makes it clear that Schleiermacher can no longer be regarded as unimportant in matters trinitarian. In the end, this book is a splendid resource both as a guide to teaching Schleiermacher in the classroom and as a point of entry into the difficult thought of this great prince of the Church.

—JEFFREY A. WILCOX
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

Living on the Boundaries: Evangelical Women, Feminism and the Theological Academy. By Nicola Hoggard Creegan and Christine D. Pohl. InterVarsity Press, 2005, 203 pages.

It is indeed rare to find the labels "evangelical" and "feminist" claimed by one and the same person. Creegan and Pohl set out to determine whether it is, in fact, possible to be both evangelical and feminist. The basis for

their project is an extensive survey of evangelical women in the theological academy from which they gathered both statistical and narrative data. The subtitle is the key to understanding the perspective of this book. The women described here are women whose primary identity is evangelical. Feminism serves as a tool for sharpening their evangelicalism, but not vice versa.

There are two major parts to this project. In the first five chapters, the authors engage in a description of the current state of affairs for evangelical women/evangelical feminists in the theological academy. The issues and incidents that arise are ones that will resonate with women who are pursuing graduate work in theology, or teaching in theological institutions. The stories are compelling for their truth—sometimes comic, sometimes tragic. Here the authors rely heavily on the interviews they conducted in their survey.

The second section, in chapters six and seven, engages those theological issues which notably divide evangelical theologians from feminist theologians. Creegan and Pohl begin this section with the problematic claim that feminism deals with "horizontal space"—that is, relationships to others; and evangelicalism deals with "vertical space"—our relationship to God. Fortunately, they do not develop this point, and move on to address the doctrinal topics where there is disagreement. While the authors successfully name the core issues and the basic points of disagreement, this portion of their project is perhaps an overly ambitious one for a book of this length. They attempt to hit *all* the main issues: sin, evil, eschatology, ecclesiology, Christology, attributes of God, authority of Scripture, and postmodernity/pluralism. In each case, the authors provide only a very short, very general overview.

What is more compelling than the brief attempt at doctrinal construction is the interplay between two interesting themes. The subtle thesis of the book seems to be that gender issues, even while they are often disregarded, are actually central to evangelicalism. The shared history of evangelicalism and feminism also plays an important, albeit minor, role in the book.

Finally, a comment regarding the definition of terms. While Creegan and Pohl spend considerable effort on the term "evangelical," raising ques-

tions as to what it entails and who gets to set the parameters for its definition, they do not do the same with the term "feminist." Both "evangelicalism" and "feminism" carry with them a multiplicity of potential meanings; it would have been helpful had the authors provided at least a working definition of their terms. In addition to definitions, there are a few distinctions which seem to get muddied. Most importantly, the authors do not always make a clear distinction between "evangelical" and "fundamentalist." In part this is due to the fact that their task is descriptive—in some cases they are working with definitions that academics of all types have assigned to themselves. This particular distinction, however, is an important difference to many who refer to themselves evangelical.

In the end, Creegan and Pohl determine that it is, indeed, possible to maintain evangelical commitments and to hold them together with feminist concerns. They conclude their project with a series of suggestions and questions, primarily focused on the practical implications of existing as evangelical women in the academic world. It is these more practical concerns which make this book a helpful tool for faculty members and administrators alike.

—ERIN KESTERSON BOWERS
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham. By D. G. Hart. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004, 224 pages.

In *Deconstructing Evangelicalism*, D. G. Hart makes a strong case for the emptiness of the term in discussions of American religion. As his subtitle deftly provides, evangelicalism as a movement is nothing more than an amalgam of conservative Protestantism operating around a bare-bones theology with little else to unify it than the pull of parachurch celebrities embodied in the figure of Billy Graham.

In the first of Hart's two sections on the "making" and "unmaking" of evangelicals he spends three chapters discussing the way in which academic efforts have contributed to the myth of evangelicalism, and in the process, have helped perpetuate the category as a viable descriptor of a cer-

tain type of American religion. Historians are singled out first and taken to task over: 1) their propensity in the latter years of the twentieth century to claim that contemporary evangelicals are linked to a much longer and deeper tradition than actually exists, and 2) their use of the term "evangelical" as representative of any of a wide range of conservative Christian believers. A similar danger is engendered by social scientists, to whom Hart points in the following chapter as guilty of helping create the category of "evangelical" in scholarship and popular parlance. So, too, in the third chapter the work of pollsters attempting to measure the movement is understood as having helped tie down evangelicals as an intellectually graspable entity through a seemingly defined, though ultimately artificial, number of doctrinal positions.

Having thus claimed that the academy helped to construct and solidify the image of evangelicalism in the popular mind, Hart next examines the so-called evangelical world itself in an effort to deconstruct the grand myth. Focusing on the three general areas of creed, liturgy, and polity, he finds in each an evangelicalism woefully undeveloped and undefined as a recognizable ecclesiastical entity. Polity and organization amongst evangelicals are seen as rather weak, with the forces of celebrity and the various parachurch movements having much more force over the whole than the National Association of Evangelicals or denominational structures. Under the rubric of doctrine, the idea of Scriptural inerrancy is examined as a possible core around which evangelicals might rally. Yet as the author's investigation shows, even this seemingly basic proposition was not without its challenges and nuances. He notes differences of opinion that belie assertions of common identity and also the lack of theological depth revealed by the supposed adherence to this creed above all others. No more positive is Hart's take on evangelical liturgy, where the desire for constantly changing contemporary forms of worship has led to great divisiveness within the movement that has done little to stop its own splintering and deconstruction. In the end, Hart concludes quite simply that although the bogey of evangelicalism looms large in the contemporary world of scholarship and politics, it simply does not exist. Ultimately, he seems to prefer a moratorium of the use of the term—the potential effects of which he sees as generally negligible.

Clearly, the project Hart has begun with this book is a bold one. If for no other reason, the fact that pollsters, popular scholarship, and the faithful alike will likely remain attached to the category for the foreseeable future makes such a volume necessary. By building a strong case for the slippery nature of the evangelical label and the way in which it is an essentially indefinable term, Hart has raised important questions concerning the relevance of evangelicalism as a religious category. Though in his penultimate chapter the focus on worship forms does not seem to carry with it the same force of argument as the remainder of his work, the rest of the text does well to reveal the way in which a rather questionable façade has been propped up and perpetuated in the public mind for decades. Even so, one wonders whether the paucity of evidence for a robust definition of evangelicalism is enough to reject out of hand what has by all accounts become a powerful and popular symbol in contemporary America. Simply stated, it would seem that there *is* something out there, even if indefinable. While generally short on helpful answers to the larger situation and perhaps too pessimistic when imagining the future, his work is thought-provoking and is recommended reading for all students of American religious culture and history as well as the millions of self-identified evangelicals throughout America. If nothing else, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism* may help to begin new discussions that will blossom into further scholarship and debate.

—JOSHUA ZEIFLE
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Islam and the Challenge of Democracy. Edited by Khaled Abou El Fadl, Joshua Cohen and Deborah Chasman. Princeton, 2004, 136 pages.

Khaled Abou El Fadl's *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy* addresses a highly-charged question of intense topical significance: is Islam compatible with democracy? The book consists of a forty-two page title essay by El Fadl offering an affirmative answer to that question, followed by responses by eleven distinguished critics (four of them Muslim), itself followed by a twenty-page rejoinder by El Fadl. With one exception, earlier versions

of all the contributions first appeared in the April/May 2003 issue of the magazine *Boston Review*.

As El Fadl formulates the issue in his title essay for the book, the basic issue is "philosophical and doctrinal" (4). On the one hand, Islam holds that sovereignty, and with it law, comes from a God whose commands and law (in Arabic, *shari'ah*) are by definition unbounded by limitation of any kind. On the other hand, modern democratic theory insists, in the name of human autonomy, that government and law be strictly limited to certain clearly-delineated functions. How then do we reconcile these two apparently inconsistent conceptions of sovereignty to provide the normative basis of a practicable politics? In form, the answer is that divine law commands justice, and justice demands limited government. The difficulties arise in identifying the content of justice, and in tracing that content back to God's law.

A preliminary difficulty is what El Fadl concedes to be the vagueness and indeterminacy of *shari'ah*. The Qur'an, the direct revelation of God's will, commands us to do justice, but neither "defines the constituent elements of justice" (18-19) nor specifies "a particular form of government" as best (5). It commands us to establish "a nonautocratic, consultative method of governance" (5), but offers little guidance about what that means. Worse yet, our access to God's will is weak and unreliable (9); every divine command requires interpretation, but every act of interpretation is also an occasion for *mis*interpretation (9).

This difficulty leaves the Muslim believer with a fairly severe dilemma. On the one hand, he or she is obliged to do God's will; on the other hand, it's unclear how to gain access to it. After canvassing a series of approaches to this dilemma, El Fadl arrives at last at the two most prominent attempts at resolving it within the orthodox Sunni tradition.

The first approach, known in Arabic as *mukhatti'ah*, asserts that that for any question we have about the content of God's will, there is—whether we can access it or not—one uniquely correct answer waiting for discovery. The content of divine justice, then, is "there" to be found, and we are obliged not only to search sincerely and diligently to understand, but to do our best to discover it (31). This view implies that we can do our best to

know God but fail; God's mind is beyond our powers, and if we lack the resources to access his thoughts, we are in a certain way simply out of luck.

The second approach, known in Arabic as *mussawi'bah*, denies what its rival asserts. Contrary to *mukhatt'iah*, *mussawi'bah* denies that God wills unique answers to questions we might have about the content of justice; the content of justice is not "there" to be found, but is in a certain sense constructed by us. We are, on this view, required to interpret God's will in humanized terms, not to attempt to access it directly. Given the vagaries of human conceptions of justice, *mussawi'bah* precludes the possibility of there being one unique answer to the question, "What does God will?" Since there is no "right answer," sincere and diligent search is the most that can be demanded of us (32). "In sum, if a person honestly and sincerely believes that such and such is the law of God, then for that person it is in fact God's law" (33). This view implies that so long as we do our best to know God's will, we never can fail; on the other hand, the view implies paradoxically that two sincere believers can come to incompatible positions on God's will while both being "right."

El Fadl rejects the first approach, and in opting for the second, suggests that it provides the basis of Islamic democracy (33). We are, he claims, charged to interpret the divine law by regulating our interpretations of it by a humanistic conception of justice—in the full knowledge of the relative indeterminacy of God's law, and the unreliability of our access to it. Once we see this, we're free to surmise that "perhaps God does not seek to regulate all human affairs and instead leaves human beings considerable latitude in regulating their own. . ." (9).

By this strategy, El Fadl claims, we can problematize even the most putatively clear scriptural commandment, e.g., amputation for theft. To do so, we simply ask, repeatedly, whether the commandment in question coheres with our conception of justice and whether we can claim absolute certainty that we know what it asks of us (34-35). Our inevitable uncertainty about God's will precludes the possibility that Islamic governments can claim to implement divine law through statute or regulation, and thus creates a functional equivalent of a distinction between Mosque and State (36). Given what El Fadl takes to be the Qur'an's exaltation of the individual, its recognition of diversity, its emphasis on consultative government,

and its rejection of human despotism, we thus have in hand the potential for developing an authentically Islamic and democratic politics.

It is a remarkably ambitious argument, open to challenge at many places. Unfortunately it goes mostly unscrutinized in the fifty-some odd pages of misdescribed "responses" that follow it. Of the eleven respondents solicited to comment on El Fadl's essay, only three make any genuine attempt to come to grips with its contents. The remaining eight ignore El Fadl's claims to raise side-issues of their own, or to discuss questions of practical implementation that sidestep what El Fadl himself insists is the fundamental "philosophical and doctrinal" issue.

Of the three genuinely responsive essays—by Muqtedar Khan, Mohammad Fadel, and David Novak—Fadel's is by far the most critical and most cogent, amounting in effect to a *mukhatt'iah*-based attack on El Fadl's *mussawi'bah*-based interpretation of divine law (81-86). Meanwhile, Novak offers insights for El Fadl from the Jewish tradition that cohere with El Fadl's claims about Islam, and Khan defends a radically populist approach to scriptural interpretation deliberately at odds with El Fadl's. The reader can decide whether El Fadl's impassioned responses to Fadel and Khan succeed as responses to them (112-125).

Though I lack the space to offer a full critique of El Fadl's arguments, five obvious difficulties require comment.

First, while El Fadl candidly admits that God's specifically political commands are vague and indeterminate, he never seems to grapple with the fact that this might pose a problem of its own. After all, if God's commands are indeterminate, they lack content, and if so, seem to lack relevance. Much of El Fadl's project seems to consist in grafting the findings of modern democratic theory onto a *shari'ah*-based template, but it is often unclear whether the motivation for the project as a whole derives from democratic theory or the from the distinctively Islamic imperatives of *shari'ah*.

Second, El Fadl insists rather hastily that the Qur'an offers the basis for inviolable individual rights (23). However, he doesn't reflect on the obvious paradox that in every case where God unequivocally commands us in the Qur'an, his commands rest on a coercive ultimatum: either we are to

do his will on faith or we are to be damned to Hell for eternity. That doesn't sound much like "inviolability."

Third, El Fadl's *mussawi'bah*-based approach to scripture leads fairly quickly to some mind-numbing paradoxes. For one thing, *mussawi'bah* is supposed to contrast with the idea that there is one right answer to the question, "What is God's will?". But it's also supposed to *be* the right answer to that question. The combination of claims strikes me as incoherent. Similarly, El Fadl tells us that he adopts the *mussawi'bah* approach because (on his view), humans lack access to God's will. How then does he know that God wants us to adopt *mussawi'bah*? Having argued so vehemently that God's will is a mystery, he is hardly in a position to exclude the possibility that perhaps *mukhatti'ah* is precisely what God wills.

Fourth, El Fadl tells us on the one hand that according to *mussawi'bah*, "if a person honestly and sincerely believes that such and such is the law of God, then for that person it is in fact God's law" (33). It would seem to follow that if a legislator honestly and sincerely believes that such and such is God's law, it is. And yet El Fadl later tells us "if a legal opinion is adopted and enforced by the state, it cannot be said to be God's law" (34). Why not? If the legislator "honestly and sincerely believes" that it is God's law, what else could it be? Surely El Fadl cannot mean that God wills a distinct law for *each* "honest and sincere" person; that would simply be a subversion of law as such.

Finally, consider the claim with which El Fadl leaves us: we are, on the *mussawi'bah* interpretation, to inquire into God's will in the knowledge that we lack access to it, and that there is no uniquely correct answer to any question we ask about it. Despite that, we are, nonetheless, obliged to search sincerely and diligently (32-33). But how are we to do so? What are we trying to discover? What is the point of looking for something that is by definition undiscoverable? These questions, as old as Plato's *Euthyphro* and *Meno*, strike me as both crucial and unanswerable within El Fadl's framework, and his failure to deal with them threatens to transform the Islamic call for salvation (*falah*) into a romantic quest worthy of Don Quixote: we are, on his view, to strive for goals "unreachable by human effort" for reasons inaccessible to human cognition (23). This doesn't seem

to me a promising basis for any human endeavor, much less democratic politics.

El Fadl ends the book with a call for dialogue. But the book seems to suffer from a fatal deficiency in precisely this respect. El Fadl claims to be offering a version of Islam that reconciles it to "modernity." But "modernity" is at least in part the product of a secular tradition that begins with Plato, runs through Picodella Mirandola, and eventually finds its way to the liberal democratic tradition we associate with Locke, Jefferson and Mill. What this book lacks is any contributor who is an explicit defender of this tradition, willing to stake its claims in so many words or offer anything resembling a fundamental challenge to El Fadl's argument. The result, in my view, is a curiously anti-climactic discussion that raises many more questions than it answers—among them the question of Islam's compatibility with democracy.

—IRFAN KHAWAJA
THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

A History of Polish Christianity. By Jerzy Kloczowski. Translated by Malgorzata Sady. Cambridge University Press, 2000, xxxviii and 385 pages.

Jerzy Kloczowski is Poland's foremost expert on Polish Christianity, and one of Poland's greatest living historians. Founder and director of the Institute of East-Central Europe in Lublin, Kloczowski has written extensively on Christianity in his native country. A soldier in the Home Army during World War II, he participated in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. He is formerly Professor of History at the Catholic University of Lublin, and has served as the Chairman of the Polish Committee for UNESCO.

Professor Kloczowski's book provides a rich introduction to the complex history of Christianity in Europe, by focusing on the generally overlooked history of Christianity in Poland. His book begins its thousand-year story by examining the pagan beliefs of the pre-Christian Slavs, and it ends with the revolution of 1989. Whether discussing the first Polish baptisms, the impact of the Reformation, or the ideological shifts during the Enlightenment, Kloczowski begins each section with a discussion of events in Western Europe. Once having provided a familiar background, he then turns

to the particular characters and crises in Poland. Given the structure of this book, its title is somewhat misleading. Professor Kloczowski narrates the history of Christianity, the history of Poland, and the history of Polish Christianity, all at once. This approach not only leaves the text accessible to a wide range of readers, but it shows how linked Poland's cultural development has been to the rest of Europe.

Kloczowski, revealing his mastery of the subject matter, effortlessly weaves historiographical controversies into the tapestry of his text. His discussions of the special role of Catholicism in Polish culture, the religiosity of the masses, and the relations between church and state acquaint readers with the main debates in the field. Some of these arguments are left in need of further illumination. As Kloczowski states in the preface, however, one of the main objectives of his text is to raise interest with the hope of encouraging dialogue. The brevity with which so many central issues are addressed by the author may tease specialists. The wonderful bibliographical essay found at the end of the book will help those searching for more answers. Although mainly a guide through the main themes of Polish Christianity, the text serves as an excellent point of departure for specialized inquiry.

The book's primary goal is to reform the popular portrayal of Poland as monolithically Catholic, thus the interaction among Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Muslim, and Jewish neighbors is repeatedly addressed. For many centuries the Polish Commonwealth was multinational and multiconfessional. Central to Poland's history have been its Statute of General Toleration, revolutionary for the sixteenth century, and its pervasive skepticism of all forms of absolutism, including Catholic. With the partitions of the 18th century ending Polish political sovereignty, a chauvinistic form of Polish Catholicism began to develop. Two world wars, and the subsequent shifts in both borders and demographics, left Poland overwhelmingly Polish and Catholic for the first time. The Catholic Church reached its zenith of influence and popular support during the decades of communist rule, but its strength grew alongside newly formed circles of Catholic intellectuals. Today, the Church in Poland is experiencing a growing divide between organized groups of progressives, most notably the intellectuals associated with Znak, and conservatives, the supporters of Radio Maryja. This divide

carries great political and cultural significance, and while it is alluded to in the postscript, it is not adequately acknowledged.

Anti-Semitism is a vital element of the debate, and while Professor Kloczowski does mention Polish anti-Semitism, particularly its reemergence during the inter-war period, his treatment of the subject is incomplete. The book fails to capture the size and importance of the Jewish communities in Poland before 1939. This is especially disappointing after both Christopher Brooke's foreword, and the book's abstract promise of a more thorough discussion of Polish-Jewish relations. Professor Kloczowski does admit to the shameful emergence of religious intolerance during the 19th and 20th centuries, but he does not adequately develop this phenomenon within his narrative. Given the recent scholarship revealing acts of unspeakable brutality by certain Poles upon Jews, and the rise of a highly conservative press and highly conservative politicians in contemporary Poland, the book's treatment of the subject appears rather meager. This is the book's lone, although significant, weakness.

As for the text's supplemental material, the fifteen maps found at the beginning of the book will fascinate those unfamiliar with Polish history, while simultaneously delighting specialists. The choice of quality illustrations is less consistent. The collection includes beautiful photos of both Wit Stwosz's altar in St. Mary's Church in Krakow, and the wooden synagogue at Smadowa. The dim photo of the Royal Chapel of the Holy Trinity in Lublin Castle, on the other hand, is poorly chosen. It fails to capture the mix of western and eastern artistic styles that makes the chapel so famous. It is also not clear why a photograph of the courtyard of the Collegium Maius in Krakow is included, while a reproduction of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa is so conspicuously absent.

Professor Kloczowski's *A History of Polish Christianity* is an important book for historians, as well as for those generally interested in the development of Christianity. The book rightfully centers Poland within a European context, and it dispels many misleading myths about the Polish nation. This translation will expose many in the English-speaking world to a master historian with an unparalleled command of his field.

—THOMAS MAJDANSKI
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

The Priority of Love: Christian Charity and Social Justice. By Timothy P. Jackson. Princeton University Press, 2003, 222 pages.

In *The Priority of Love*, Timothy Jackson, professor of Christian ethics at Emory University, provides an impressive companion piece to his earlier work, *Love Disconsoled: Meditations on Christian Charity* (Cambridge, 1999). Jackson's earlier work was an attempt to uncouple Christian love from ends improper to love itself, such as the desire for reward and immortality. An object of love, in other words, is not to be "loved" for an end beyond itself, but as its own end—thus love is *dis*consoled, chastened of false comforts, desires, and ends. *The Priority of Love*, then, seeks to further the argument of *Love Disconsoled*, bolstering and extending Jackson's position of what he calls "strong *agape*" (10).

In his introductory remarks, Jackson claims that in modern western history, divine or agapic love has been eclipsed by other (albeit worthy) values, such as prudence, freedom, and justice. Jackson's objective is nothing less than "a critical defense of the priority of love, defined as *agape's* primacy among divine gifts and human goods" (8). Consequently, this sense of *strong* agape suggests that agapic love is a "metavalue," one that not only holds a "unique priority" over all other human values but "is the necessary condition to realizing and sustaining other human values in any adequate form" (10-11).

Jackson's thesis unfolds over the course of five chapters. Chapter One inquires as to the relationship between love and justice. Justice, unlike love, is not capable of bringing "individuals to fuller personhood" or "sustain the well-being of those [who are] no longer personal agents" (34). Instead, justice only attends to the *status* of a human being as a "person" or "agent" worthy of rights and so forth, while love attends to a human being regardless of his or her status before justice. Chapter Two deals with the relationship between love and justice for God. God freely binds himself to humanity as an expression of love, and therefore, is obligated to humanity as a matter of justice. The upshot is that we, too, are to bind ourselves to others out of love and thus recognize our obligation to them as a matter of justice.

Chapter Three asks how agape combats "unjustifiable forms of justice" and whether agape can ever support violence (94). Jackson concludes that, on the one hand, "Christian violence may, *in extremis*, be the content of political love," seeking to defend the innocent and establish justice (122), and, on the other hand, "*agape* may embody nonviolence because this attitude can also, in turn, prick the consciences of the unjust, as well as summon potential victims to heroism" (128). This chapter closes with a case in point: an analysis of the events and aftermath of September 11, 2001. With chapter four, Jackson moves to the theme of forgiveness, and claims that forgiveness can be thought of as the "'cessation of againstness,' the resolve to continue to will the good for others rather than to despise them, in spite of any hostility and transgression" (144). As if coming full circle with his earlier work, *Love Disconsoled*, Jackson includes a brief section on the relationship between immortality and forgiveness. Forgiveness, as conformity to God's will, is, Jackson contends, its own reward (161). Forgiveness cannot depend on future vindication.

Chapter Five is an extended treatment of abortion. The aim "is to spell out what a general ethic of care [agapic love], coupled with a robust commitment to justice, means for the opposing poles on abortion" (173). Jackson's analysis of abortion is thorough, traversing medical, ethical, and theological ground, and is one of the finest discussions of the issue available. In regard to justice, Jackson contends that justice suggests that the fetus as a "potential...person may...ground a prima facie right to life," even against the woman carrying the fetus (189). But Jackson does not rule out the possibility of abortion, for agapic love requires that we "become more attentive to our fellows' vulnerabilities, both mothers' and fetuses', rather than less," and this may point to the sort of care for the woman that would allow (early-term) abortion (210).

With *The Priority of Love*, there can be no doubt that Jackson is one of the premiere Christian ethicists working today. Jackson's volume is a learned and incisive analysis of Christian agape and the role it can play in our public discourse and is highly recommended to all those interested in theology, ethics, and public theology.

—TODD V. CIOFFI
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Hegel and Christian Theology: A Reading of "The Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion." By Peter C. Hodgson. Oxford University Press, 2005, 308 pages.

The recent explosion of interest in Thomas Aquinas was sparked, at least in part, by the growing recognition that Thomas is both more Aristotelian and more Augustinian than previous generations had appreciated. Something parallel seems to be developing with respect to Hegel: Robert Pippin and friends have been busy convincing us that Hegel is more Kantian than conventional interpretations realized, while Peter Hodgson has maintained that he is more Augustinian. The present volume represents the culmination of Hodgson's efforts.

In his *Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel is concerned with completing Kant's anti-metaphysical revolution, over against would-be post- and anti-metaphysicians (including Kant) who continue to conjure metaphysical "Gods" by projecting finite categories into infinity. Their "Gods" thereby remain all-too-finite, locked on the other side of an unbridgeable ontological chasm; residual metaphysics thus underlies their assumptions about, for instance, God's unknowability. By contrast, Hegel insists that the appropriate response to the demise of metaphysics is *not* to turn one's attention to "the subject," but to recover a properly non-metaphysical understanding of God's relation to the world—to recover, that is, a robust sense of God's triunity.

Hodgson writes that Hegel claims that the *infinity* proper to God is *Trinity*: God-in-Godself is the eternal dynamic of being (or "pure thought"), being-other (or "representation"), and the sublation of this being-other (or "self-consciousness"). As Trinity, God is not imprisoned by God's infinity; the triune God can be Godself in creating, making Godself known, reconciling fallen creatures to Godself, and redeeming creation. For instance, being-other is internal to God's being, and this internal othering is the basis for God's creativity *ad extra*—and God's being is characterized by the sublation of being-other, such that God's creation, while really other, does not stand "outside" of God's infinitude. Similarly, humans can know God-in-Godself: God eternally represents Godself, and God sets this representation forth in the world; God is eternally self-conscious, and God draws

us into this self-consciousness. We humans aren't just ignorant, however; we're also fallen. The God who eternally posits Godself as other thus takes our radical otherness—sinful alienation from God—upon Godself; and the God who eternally sublates otherness reconciles even this sinful alienation to God. We are thereby taken up into God's infinite intersubjectivity, an intersubjectivity which is mirrored in the neighbor-love of Christian community. In creation, revelation, reconciliation, and redemption, therefore, Hegel insists that "the Trinity is the truth not only about God but about the whole of reality in all its determinacy and particularity" (140).

We might be surprised to hear that Hegel develops a robustly trinitarian theology, though not, perhaps, if we've read the relevant texts. More startling is a claim that Hodgson doesn't call much attention to: the claim that this same trinitarianism underlies Hegel's entire system, from the *Phenomenology* to the *Encyclopedia* (263). For Hegel, everything from logic to mutual recognition is a vestige of the Trinity. If Hodgson is right about this, there's a sense in which Hegel's completion of the Kantian turn depends upon his Augustinianism—which would mean that Pippin and Hodgson must be read together.

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Changing Tides: Latin America and World Mission Today. By Samuel Escobar. Orbis, 2002, 206 pages.

In the preface, Escobar describes Latin America as "a kind of laboratory of experiences and thinking" (xiii). His inference is twofold: first—retrospectively—the manifold complex social, political, ecclesiological movements experienced in Latin America during the twentieth century concretized key questions about the church's mission. These questions include, for example, mission's liaison with empire, the presence of the poor, an institutionalized clergy, the consequences of foreign missionaries, etc. Escobar's historical examination addresses the answers developed by the mainline Protestant and Catholic churches, and perceives in the advance of the grassroots Pentecostal churches an initial indigenous response.

Escobar implies that the Latin American context is such that it has forced the church into constructing, at least elements of, a missiology which will emerge as significant for Christianity's changed situation in the world. These missionary activities are already occurring to some degree in Latin America, and by biblical reflection, historical investigation, and learning from the social sciences one can develop a composite picture of this emerging missiology. He focuses particularly on structures that will nurture the missionary imperative. Historical forms of the church and the living consequences of these forms allow Escobar to work backwards to core theological questions—the priesthood of all believers or professional educated clergy, a docetic or Gnostic Christology, and pneumatology. Developing creative ecclesiological structures is part of Christian obedience because, as the gospel is missionary, so ecclesiological structures which better stimulate missionary behavior are closer to the gospel.

Second—proactively—since "the church is its mission," an examination of the Latin American experience assists the development of a missiological framework which will promote that mission. This framework will have a global vision both because of the physical missionary movement from Latin America to the world, and because "Christianity's shift southward" means that the current questions raised by Latin America are soon to become the global theological questions of the post-Christendom world.

On the whole Escobar's work is well researched and provides a solid introduction to the currents present in Latin American missiology. He is a sympathetic reader of all the traditions—and I personally lack sufficient independent knowledge to address Escobar on the particulars. The only question I have relates to his demployment of sociology and theology, and thus the normative assertions he makes concerning issues like "translation" and "Constantinian Christianity".

Escobar advocates using the social sciences, but only within a tempering framework of evangelical or missiological theology. On the one hand, Escobar fears a manipulative missiology which uses managerial techniques and marketing strategies to promote the gospel. On the other hand, he fears a reductionist approach which conceives of mission simply as part of the socio-economic process at the service of western civilization. But a further problem, which remains implicit, is the way Escobar relates visible

and identifiable historical processes and hidden theological imperatives. For example, Escobar rejects an interpretation of the popular churches which view them as "a simple reflection of the social and economic conditions in which they emerge and spread" (103). And he criticizes sociologists for the limitation of using only external criteria in their analyses "because there is no consideration of the possibility that these churches might have their own spiritual dynamic and a spiritual message that explains their expansionary and transforming power" (103). This raises the question of criteria, which I think Escobar needs to address more carefully. He cannot expect sociologists to use the same criteria as theologians, so the question for sociologists becomes "in what way is a spiritual dynamic visible so that it can be apprehended according to sociological methodology?" Escobar advocates a "missiological perspective" orientated toward the work of the Holy Spirit. This is fine, but it fails to establish any criteria for visibly discerning this work. What criteria do we have for judging whether one church is more missionary than another? It cannot simply be the reception or sending of foreign missionaries, since Escobar concluded that the influx of Catholic missionaries after their expulsion from China reinforced the distinction of the clergy from the laity and so retarded the structural development of the priesthood of all believers—thus this influx was, in a sense, anti-missionary. Escobar also rejects using the criterion of numerical growth to discern the Spirit's work as this is complicit with a "managerial technique" approach.

His own focus seems to fall on the quality of the subjective experience of the adherents, but this is simply to focus on the "benefits of Christ." We can further problematize the question by looking at Escobar's use of sociology to demonstrate how religious experience leads to upward social mobility. Pentecostal prohibitions against alcohol and tobacco liberate the "urban poor and lower-middle classes" from "bad-habits". Escobar adds to this the joyful experience of Christian worship so that "self-discipline is here accompanied by joy and celebration" (139). This "change of life" is considered "evidence of Christ's redeeming power." The identification of joy lifts Escobar's use of sociology out of the reductionisms of a purely material approach. One can imagine sociologists accepting this if "Christ" is used as a cipher for the constitution of a supportive community around

the metaphors, images and language of a sacred text and performed in liturgy and ritual which engenders ethical demands and obedience. But Escobar expects something more: he claims that subjective spiritual experience which results in missionary impulse is the visible indication of the presence of the risen Jesus in the power of the Spirit, and that this can be promoted by creative ecclesiological structures sensitive to the demands of culture and context. I do not agree, not because I think Escobar is necessarily theologically wrong, but because he himself has reduced "spirituality" to a structural contingency, i.e., people are leaving the Catholic church for the local Pentecostal church because, in the Catholic church, a professional clergy mediates the experience of Christ, while in the Pentecostal church, the experience of Christ is immediate.

Escobar claims that the Holy Spirit is the stimulator of mission and is linked to "a spiritual experience that revitalized faith and devotion to Jesus Christ. ... Along with this drive came creativity in methods for announcing the gospel that were appropriate to the new social and cultural settings" (106). Thus spiritual experience is by definition one which results in missionary obedience. The problem is that Escobar portrays this evangelical thrust as "a unique characteristic" of evangelical theology and claims that this emphasis "makes evangelical theologizing different from the forms of Protestant theology that stem from Churches that are not concerned with evangelization" (121). This emphasis on the part of evangelical churches is compared to the focus of other churches on the correction of abuses, contextual identity, or relevance in the sociopolitical issues of the day, and to the Catholic Church's emphasis on the sacraments which mediate salvation and its assumption of an already existing Christian nation. Again Escobar binds the Holy Spirit to a specific ecclesiological form.

This quasi-sociological/theological position, which remains implicit while driving his analysis, is perhaps a consequence of Escobar's negative attitude toward western academic theology with its implied claims to normativity. This attitude appears to have left Escobar without the necessary theological tools to address the excesses of his own system. This shortfall plainly derives from his support of the translation theory which produces a substantive and normative theological position from historical investigation, a position which is then given scriptural support; in short, a type of

'neutral' theological position because it is writ large in history and so open to sociological investigation. And because it is not 'theology,' it is not open to theological critique. In fact, for Escobar, theology contradicts the missionary mandate because it is "concerned with tracing carefully the borders of orthodoxy, maintaining the limits of an acceptable expression of the faith that has been defined in a particular context." He continues that the missionary "embarks on the task of crossing borders and frontiers of all kinds, challenged many times to stretch to new limits the understanding of truth..." (131-2). This position has a great deal of truth to it, but is an abstraction—one that Escobar himself does not hold to! For example, he embarks on a long examination of docetic Christology (115-126), and its negative consequences for missionary interaction. Docetism is, of course, a heresy which theology addressed by "tracing the borders of orthodoxy", and which became *ecumenically* posited at Chalcedon. However, in Chalcedon Escobar sees precisely the problem of Constantinian theology and western hegemony. He employs these categories as missiologically necessary but rejects their historical development. This leaves one in the curious position of accepting what serves the indigenous cause (Nestorianism is popular in this regard due to the way it permits cultic continuity) and rejecting whatever retards the missionary drive (docetism in this case). Here Escobar is in need of more nuance.

This all leads to the great Satan a.k.a. a "Eurocentric theology" which indulged in "reductionist theology", i.e., it gave a gospel without the kingdom. (See 144. This, of course, is not true—the problem especially at mid to late 19th century and early 20th century was that industrial and social progress led to identifying the "kingdom" with western civilization so that western civilization accompanying the gospel was the kingdom.) Lopsided political involvement has derived from "a western worldview that has deprived them of a holistic understanding of human beings and the world" (144). The missionary drive is retarded because "the universality of Jesus Christ has been for too long conveyed in the philosophical categories of western culture" (165). Indeed "the idea that only rich and large churches are able to take part in the global mission is the result of the Constantinian paradigm in which mission is carried out from the top down, from the center of economic and political power" (153). No doubt there is much

truth in these caricatures, but they have a "pick and choose" feel to them. For example, first, while Catholic churches undertook mission, Protestant churches tended to invest missionary responsibility in societies. This is clearly seen in the constitution of the Edinburgh 1910 conference to which Escobar devotes some space. Second, though mission came from the center of economic and political power, missions did not invest theological significance in this position—indeed as societies, they had no authority to make theological statements. Third, the notion that the church is missionary by its very nature, a key predicate in Escobar's program, emerged within the context of a western church struggling with its post-Christendom situation. Escobar's own agenda, in other words, derives from a most western and the most systematic of theology, and his simple recourse to the terms "evangelical" and "biblical" prove insufficient to disguise these roots.

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Online: http://www.ptsem.edu/koinonia/index.html
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Subscription Information:

Annual Subscription	$15.00
Student Price	$10.00
Institution Price	$20.00

The paper used in this publication is acid-free and meets the minimum requirement of the American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984

Printed in the USA by:
Cadmus/Science Press
300 West Chestnut St
Ephrata, PA 17522-0497

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PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
P.O. BOX 821
PRINCETON, NJ 08542